

AMBASSADOR HARRY G. BARNES, JR.

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview was not edited by Ambassador Barnes]

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with Ambassador Harry Barnes. Today is April 25, 2001, and we are in Washington DC. This interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Harry, let's begin at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

BARNES: I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, the 5th of June 1926. My parents came from the Midwest. My mother from southeastern Iowa and my father from the Minnesota-North Dakota border. They met at the University of Wisconsin. My father's work was in the area of what at the time was called motor equipment; in effect what we would call now, I suppose, road building equipment. He then moved to the automobile retail business and from there to the battery business. My mother, somewhat unusual for the time, also went into business, this is the mid-'30s, and ran a coffee shop for people working in that particular area of St. Paul. Then we moved to upstate New York outside of Buffalo in the early 1940s. This was in conjunction with the battery business that my father was then in, and then moved back to St. Paul again with the same firm.

I did my schooling in public schools in St. Paul.

Q: Let's talk a bit about St. Paul. You were sort of becoming aware just about the time of the Great Depression, weren't you?

BARNES: No, a little later actually. Because, not that the Depression was over by mid-'30s, but it was not what it was earlier. No, I don't have a sense as I was growing up of what people told me about the Depression. Of course, my family was employed and, in those days, it really made the difference.

Q: In St. Paul, where did you go to school?

BARNES: I went to the neighborhood school in the area of St. Paul we lived in and went on to junior high school, also in St. Paul. Then my parents decided, so they told me, that I needed something more in the way of discipline and that took the form of sending me to a private school, in this case a parochial school, a Catholic school which was a military school for boys, as well and for the first year and a half of high school I went to St. Thomas Academy, part of St. Thomas College in St. Paul.

Q: While you were in grammar school and particularly those early years9t, were there any courses that sort of particularly intrigued you? What were your interests?

BARNES: Nothing that is that clear to me now in terms of courses. My general feeling is that I enjoyed school, enjoyed learning, but one subject compared to another subject, no.

What also intrigued me, which is was not a school activity was what my father would tell me from the trips he took in conjunction with his business, this is particularly the road building type things and he used to bring me back brochures or maps that told something about where he had been in the Midwest.

The second aspect as I recall, and maybe this has some relevance, my mother's family was German in origin and...

Q: What was her name?

BARNES: Poehler was on her mother's side and her father's side was Blaul. We as children would go with my parents to my mother's mother, my grandmother's place in Southeastern Iowa, Burlington - I don't know; my grandfather had died before I was born - for Christmas; and part of Christmas was a set of German traditions.

Q: You had the Christmas tree with candles on it?

BARNES: Yes, and certain Christmas foods. We were a fairly numerous number of cousins. How much of our traditions, like gathering together at the top of the stairs and coming down by age, the stocking tradition is specifically German, I am not sure but I think probably some of them were. German Christmas carols, for example. I had an aunt who was a singer and had some of her training in Germany and introduced me to opera through recordings, at that point so that was again something beyond the immediate situation.

Q: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

BARNES: Two brothers, I was the oldest of three and just to jump ahead a bit, both have ended up being university professors.

Just to continue on the opera, I think it was because of the aunt and later began always to make sure that I listened to the Saturday afternoon Met performance that was on the radio.

Q: Who sponsored that?

BARNES: Texaco. They still do and I remember my parents taking me to the St. Paul opera from time to time as I was growing up.

When I went into high school, of course, there what particularly intrigued me was Latin. I had a priest as a teacher and I still remember his name, as a matter of fact. He made Latin seem interesting and sort of fun too.

Q: Well, languages; you have a reputation for languages. Is this the first language?

BARNES: That's the first language, yes.

Q: How about German?

BARNES: German, really bits and pieces because of the family traditions.

Q: But they didn't speak it? They were far enough removed?

BARNES: Far enough removed, that is, my mother knew German, some German from growing up, some from college. The aunt still spoke German but in terms of any conversational approach in the family context, no.

Q: Now in St. Paul you went to this Catholic school. How did you find this Catholic military school? It sounds like a double whammy.

BARNES: It was just part of what I had to do and then what sticks in my mind is more the educational part than the military part.

Q: You really are in the heart of the Midwest. By the time you were reaching high school, did events in Europe and all begin to, because by the time you were hitting high school, you are talking about 1938, or so.

BARNES: I think I must have started in '39, because when we moved east to outside Buffalo in December of 1940. My recollection again, of that period was that I made it a habit of reading the morning paper and I can remember the Nazi invasion of Norway and Denmark, for example, reading that in the paper as such. I think, but I am not sure about this, that I also did a certain amount of listening to the radio news reports. I can't yet be sure whether that was St. Paul when I was growing up or later on.

Q: How about in your family? People had pretty strong opinions, one way or another as you recall about the New Deal, Franklin Roosevelt.

BARNES: Again, I am not sure whether I am remembering something from later on or earlier. My mother, I recall, had voted for Roosevelt in '33 but didn't subsequently. My father had not voted for Roosevelt in 1933, but I don't remember a lot of discussion about the New Deal as New Deal. My memories of that are sort of more from later in the '40s with respect to what happened at the time.

Q: What about when you moved to New York in December of 1940. How was school there?

BARNES: I went to the public school, the high school, but only for a semester and my parents sent me back to Minnesota to another military school, this time to an Episcopal military school in a town called Faribault, south of the Twin Cities [Editor's Note: Shattuck-Saint Mary's ended its military school program in the 1970s.]. I continued Latin in high school outside Buffalo, a place called Williamsville. In fact, parenthetically, I was just in Buffalo last week under this program, the World Affairs Councils have. They have Foreign Service people talking about diplomacy and while I was there I had somebody take me out to Williamsville and look at the houses we had lived at.

Q: While you were in high school, did you get any other languages?

BARNES: One thing occurs to me while I am thinking about my connection with Buffalo. My father went there to take over the management of a battery factory and the factory already at that point was producing batteries for submarines and aircraft for Defense Department so I got some of that sense of the preparedness that was beginning in 1940-41. I continued Latin at Shattuck which was the school in Minnesota and again I did that the two years I was there and had a good Latin teacher. I had one year of Spanish, which was OK, but the Latin meant more to me at that time, at that point.

Q: At Shattuck through high school did you find yourself moving towards any program, you really didn't major, but a concentration of that type?

BARNES: No. It was more these sort of standard liberal arts curriculum. I suppose to the extent that I did four years of Latin, I did a third and fourth year, not the rule for most students. There was an awfully small class that did that. The fact that it was a military school with ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) connections and the fact that I was there when Pearl Harbor took place in effect predisposed me,...that at least made it very evident that I was headed for something in the war context. I didn't know what but...more a question of "when" than "whether."

Q: How about reading? Any types of books that you recall that grabbed your attention?

BARNES: No, none that really stand out. I did a lot of reading, but it tended to be as I recall just more what I would say just sort of English literature and literature classics.

Q: Sports?

BARNES: Not much in contrast to my two brothers who were both football players. I was the non sports person. My father had been on the football teams. He went first to Carlton and then went to the University of Wisconsin. I was the aberration in that sense and perhaps "more intellectual" than my brothers.

Q: Summer jobs or anything like that?

BARNES: A summer job one year I did sort of a stock clerk job in a factory my father ran. That was '42 and in '43 I was already in college. I started in college in the summer of '43.

Q: So in '43 you started to college. Where did you go?

BARNES: Amherst. Amherst was a fluke in a sense that somebody had been at Shattuck went to Amherst, somebody I admired and so I figured that was enough for this particular guy, I would try it.

Q: What was Amherst like then because I imagine it was pretty well denuded of students?

BARNES: Yes. We were down to about a hundred students, three semesters a year touted as what they called ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program). I began, again with this sort of general liberal arts program, but decided to major in French and I had picked up an interest in French and this one I don't remember quite how it got started but I remember that same summer that I was working as a stock clerk, I was also sort of studying French on my own and why I am not particularly sure except that perhaps out of the study of Latin I had gotten interested and just decided it would be interesting to see what I could do on your own.

Amherst also had a good French Department which was probably one of the reasons that it was more developed than any other language. I did another year of Latin at Amherst but began to focus more on French.

Q: You were at Amherst from '43 until when?

BARNES: Amherst from '43 until October of '44. I decided to volunteer for the Army and so I went into the Army that month. I finished three semesters of the four semesters at Amherst.

Q: You were in the Army from when to when?

BARNES: From October of '44 until July of '46.

Q: Where did you go for basic training?

BARNES: To Camp Blanding Florida.

Q: That should have been an experience.

BARNES: That was a change.

Q: I was going to say, you were a boy of sort of the cold climes and all that and all of a sudden. How did you find that?

BARNES: Literally, cold, in the sense that it was that damp cold you get in northern Florida. By the time I got there in late fall, November so it was beginning to get cold. Sometimes I was colder in Florida than I had been in Minnesota.

Q: After basic training where did they place you?

BARNES: Something happened on the way to, you know, one of those situations, going over an obstacle course and I tore a cartilage in my knee and was sent to the base hospital and the doctors decided I needed surgery to remove the cartilage, something that would be done now with lasers or whatever. So I ended up convalescing from that for, this would have been probably February, 1945. By the time I got out of that I was then assigned to the hospital, in effect to the administrative section of the hospital, and ended up doing personnel work and missed the rest of the war. In effect, stayed there for the better part of the year and then was sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to become an intelligence specialist which wasn't terribly useful at that time, at that point. I just stayed there until I was discharged in July of '46.

Q: I would imagine you were looking forward to going back to college.

BARNES: Yes, I did that in the fall of 1946.

Q: And you went back to Amherst?

BARNES: I went back to Amherst.

Q: When did you graduate from there?

BARNES: I graduated, actually ended up taking an extra semester, so I had four years and a half and graduated in June of 1949. Picked up my French major.

Q: There must have been quite a change at Amherst by the time you came back?

BARNES: Yes, the GI Bill, the age of the student body, and people from a whole bunch of previous classes. My original class had been '46, now I graduated in '49.

Q: Did you get involved in the social circuit? I think of Smith, Mount Holyoke?

BARNES: Actually, I started my Holyoke connections when I was at Amherst the first time. My roommate the second semester I was there had a sister at Mount Holyoke, took me and introduced me. We were married some years later. But taking off your question about social, I joined a fraternity.

Q: What one was that?

BARNES: Phi Kappa Psi and we got involved in, what should I say, achieved or obtained a certain amount of notoriety because we were the first fraternity at Amherst and one of the first I think in the country to pledge a black student and got thrown out of the national fraternity for that sin.

We decided we wanted to do this. We told the national fraternity, or they found out, I have forgotten which, that this is what we planned to do and they threatened us and we called their bluff and so they threw us out and we took on a new name. We had the support of the administration at the college and enough solidarity within our own group.

Q: While you were at Amherst the second time, were you pointed towards anything or did you know what you wanted to do?

BARNES: Yes, in the sense that I knew I wanted to do something that had some international dimensions without knowing quite for sure what that was. I also began to develop an interest in the then Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and started taking Russian lessons from the wife of one of the faculty members who was Russian-born and exchanged lawn mowing for Russian lessons. My thought was that I would somehow get involved in something international that had a Russian connection.

The Foreign Service came up in a sense, again somewhat accidentally. One of the vacations when I was home, the family had moved back to St. Paul by that time, my father happened to see in the morning paper a story about someone who was in the Foreign Service who was back home visiting his family and knowing that I was thinking generally internationally, my father called me and said, "Why don't you call this guy up and see if you can go talk to him about the Foreign Service." Somebody named Bill Cobb.

And that I did, went to see him and was quite intrigued by what he told me. He told me about the process of course, as well as something about the life and he suggested that if someday if I ever wanted to come to Washington, he would introduce me to a few more people. So that's what I did. I have forgotten the time sequence.

Q: I think there were a number of rather active student groups in those days at Amherst, the National Student Association, or something like that.

BARNES: The closest I got to that was I had been involved actually when I was first at Amherst in something called the Student Christian Association and rejoined that when I returned and became president at one stage and that had a somewhat international dimension to it, although it tended to be more focused on the U.S. as such.

Q: This was sort of a period when also the CIA was sniffing around and recruiting. Did you get any into that?

BARNES: No. In fact, I don't even remember them coming to campus.

Q: When you graduated in 1949, what did you do?

BARNES: I had already taken the Foreign Service exam by that time.

Q: This was the three and a half day exam?

BARNES: Yes. I had taken the exam and had gone to Boston for that and I found out in March or something like that I had passed and then I had my oral interview sometime that spring so by that time I had graduated. I knew that I was at least on the waiting list.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions or how the oral exam went?

BARNES: I remember more of what I was told after the exam than the exam as such as well as the comment made by one of the others who was taking it at the time. I think we were four or five. I remember the exam being much like a certain interesting discussion.

The comment I do remember from afterwards when I was told that I had passed, the examiner asked me if I was by any chance of Italian origin. That sort of puzzled me because Barnes doesn't sound very Italian, I don't remember if they asked about my mother's family. I said, "No. Why?" He said, "Because you use your hands so much when you talk."

Another thing I remember was somebody else had been told he had passed and said he had been told he had passed despite the fact that when he had been asked to name the first three presidents of the United States, he said, "Washington, Jefferson and Adams" and was admonished by one of the examiners that the usual way of talking about the first three presidents or any president of the United States is in chronological order. That's about all I remember.

Q: Was there sort of a hiatus from the time you graduated before you entered?

BARNES: Well, in fact I had indicated I think at the time I had the oral exam, I am not sure, maybe afterwards that I was really in no hurry. By that time I had already applied and been accepted for Columbia's Russian Institute and I wanted to try to do my M.A. in Russian Studies. I actually got one offer fairly soon, I think it was that fall and I said I wanted to decline it because I hadn't even gotten through one year at Columbia.

Q: So you were at Columbia, what, from '49?

BARNES: I started in the fall of '49 and went through that first year and then in the summer of '50 by that time the Korean War had already started. I was called again and asked to come into the service, in somewhat special circumstances I will describe in a moment. Again I tried to resist. I said I wanted to finish my second year and get that degree and was told it was sort of now or never, that they weren't sure when they would have another class or whether I'd be kept on the waiting list. In retrospect, I think there may have been more bluff there than I realized.

Q: Probably, but you never know and they didn't know either.

BARNES: Probably so. I in effect entered the Foreign Service early. The special circumstances were the Department or something, I don't know how it came, but anyway, FSI ended up doing a course that fall for new Foreign Service officers from newly independent countries, about six countries; Indonesia, Israel, Sri Lanka, Egypt, I think, Korea. FSI wanted two real, live Americans to join that course and go through the course with the foreign students. So in that particular way, I don't know many others who have done it, who went through the basic officer course twice.

Q: I want to go back to Columbia. You were at Columbia from '49 to '50. What was the attitude then? The Cold War really was the Cold War by that time but here you are at Columbia, which had this Russian studies course and New York has always had a rather strong sort of Eastern European, mainly Russian Jewish group which is very, in those days very sort of leftish and all. How did this fit in? What were you getting from Columbia?

BARNES: Well, aside from a very good start in Russian studies, good faculty, good language program, a certain sense of excitement. This was dangerous in a way but it hadn't etched in terms of what was going to happen, whether, how much worse was the Cold War going to be. Korea started by the next year. That in retrospect looked like an out growth of the Cold War, but was not was really expected. I can't remember but things were closing down more in Eastern Europe. It was clearly the case. I don't remember a liberal sense as such, unless one thinks of liberal as obviously being opposed to totalitarian, but that was another type of liberal rather than leaning toward the left.

There was almost the sense that you were having a chance to look at something almost clinically, trying to understand why it was behaving the way it was behaving, recognizing it had very important implications for the U.S.

Q: When you came into the Foreign Service, you started, how long was this FSI course...?

BARNES: Almost exactly the same as the regular, a couple of months, the fall of 1950.

Q: In the first place, how many other FSOs were with you?

BARNES: Just one other, two of us. Someone named Frank Curtis. He has left the service.

Q: How did this work? I mean, what were you observing?

BARNES: Part of it was learning about what at least what FSI thought at that point was important for a new Foreign Service Officer to learn, somewhat generalized because it was not directed so much at the two Americans in the course as it was all the others but in that sense, it was the generality which was applicable and so both the learning process but it was also the learning and sharing of experiences with the others in the course which was fascinating and was then sort of exciting in itself. Rather than having traveled outside the United States before, I got a sense of what it was like to be part of newly created states and some of the hopes and expectations that came with that. There are odds and ends I remember but they are almost anecdotal.

I think what I have said in general fits more that course in the fall, It made me, if nothing else, and this is anecdotal, aware of what it was like to come from what has tended to be called, since that period a developing country and how people from, in some cases, ex-colonial countries looked at the world community, I'm thinking of say the Sri Lankans or the Pakistanis, for example, under British rule. The Koreans, of course had not been out from under Japanese occupation for all that long. The Israelis were in a special category and yet new in their own way. If I didn't have a sense of the developing world, I certainly got it then and that is what impelled me to, this is anticipating something to look toward what I would call a dual major; Eastern Europe, the Communist world and the world of developing countries.

Q: You think of the Egyptians and the Israelis sitting down together in study. How does that work?

BARNES: I've got to rethink that, I may be confusing the student body with another course. I think I may be wrong on that, it was not Egyptians, it was Pakistanis. At that point, there wasn't that sort of antagonism. That would have come later. That worked OK. There was a certain camaraderie that just came up to the fact that we were all beginning. It was a different sort of beginning from my American counterpart and myself but...

Q: You took this course and then they said, "OK, now you've got to learn to be an American Foreign Service officer"?

BARNES: Yes, start over again. And this was with the American approach. This was the very end of '50; it must have started in the beginning of December and into February of 1951.

Q: What was your, you know, the members of your beginning class? Would you characterize them? Was this a job? Were they looking for a career?

BARNES: Almost all, perhaps indeed all, were pretty much out of college with military experience. I don't remember if there was anybody who hadn't had some sort of military service at that point. Definitely a career. Some had, a few had had some experience outside the United States, largely again in the military and one or two either had grown up outside the United States or some had had other ways of knowing what the rest of the world was like but basically, we all thought we were going into a lifetime career.

Q: I was wondering if there was a sense of mission, you know the United States has something to offer and you know, we were going to change the world. Was that not...?

BARNES: Not that strong. I think a little more modest, perhaps although certainly a consciousness of the fact that the U.S. had a role it had not had before the war. And of course, the Cold War accentuated that. The Korean War was still going on, and we were somewhere between the sense that the U.S. knew what it was doing, the U.S. was trying to find out what it was supposed to do.

Q: Did you get any feel for the State Department?

BARNES: Yes, basically a feeling of, these were people who knew what they were about. It was a talented group. I don't remember any sense of, what should I say, a frustration because of bureaucracy or sense of stodginess. Again, it may have been the sense the U.S. had responsibilities; the U.S. was going somewhere, despite the trials and tribulations.

Q: So when it came time for assignments, did you get a chance to ask?

BARNES: Yes, we were given a list and we were told we could pick three places and my three were Kabul, Bombay and Jakarta which was essentially following the idea that I mentioned a few minutes ago, mainly I wanted to get a sense of the developing world and I thought I'll come back and look for a chance to work in the Communist. We were looking at it both in the way as the system of organizing life or trying to.

Q: Where did you go?

BARNES: The consulate general in Bombay. From February 2, 1951 until roughly July, 1953.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

BARNES: Prescott Childs who subsequently went on to be the Consul General in Antwerp before retiring.

One anecdote before we go on. This is from my wife's experience. There was a course for wives during the period while we were taking our junior officer course, taught by, don't know if I remember her first name, her last name was Alling. Her husband had been ambassador to Pakistan and had died at post [Editor's note: Paul H Alling was the first American Ambassador to Pakistan and served from February to June 1948. He contracted amoebic dysentery at post and died in January 1949]. Her job was to try to make sure that these new Foreign Service Officer's wives understood what the obligations were of the Foreign Service wife and the thing that stuck most in my wife's mind anyway was Mrs. Alling's description of how to entertain the king and the queen. Fortunately, in a sense we hadn't, at least at one point later in our career we had passing acquaintance with the king and queen of Nepal but that's about the closest we got to using that information. Not to mention questions of gloves and turning cards and so on.

Q: In Bombay in 1952, what was it like then?

BARNES: At one level, it was a shock, having never been outside the States before.

Q: You were married by this time?

BARNES: Yes. I got married actually while I was still at Amherst. I came back from the Army, almost three years and we had one child and the visual shock coming into Bombay in the late hours of the night, early hours of the morning in March, which is not really hot compared to the way it gets later but it was hot enough too and as you got off the plane it was as you were coming into a small furnace. And then going through the..., even at whatever hour it was but it was late, but it was still very,...the streets were very, very crowded. Going by a funeral procession, which was all very visible, and so on.

We should have been put up, according to consulate procedure at the principle hotel of town is some ways still is the Taj Mahal facing on the sea, on the bay, with a view of the large gate, called the Gate with India with which the British commemorated the visit of, I think it was the King. Anyway, for some reason, there was no room at the inn at that time so we were put in another hotel, which was OK but not great in terms of cleanliness, sort of what one worries about when one has a small child. We decided after a, because our apartment wasn't ready sort of after a week so that we really had to move to something that was more passable and we selected a place and just as we are getting into a car to take us to the new hotel, a consulate car pulled up with another couple and their children and they were moving into the place we were leaving and we asked them where they were coming from and they were coming from the place to which we were moving. So there was that aspect of getting used to a place but it was soon overtaken by a fascination with the country and over the couple of years we were there, we did a lot of traveling around the country often taking our child and then we had another child born in Bombay, as a matter of fact.

My work was fairly typical of a new officer; a rotational type assignment, consular work for about a year or so. I was the consular officer, I was the GSO (General Services Officer, i.e., administration) for about six months, I was one of three at that point; economic officer for another stretch, and then finally the last few months I was the one political officer at the consulate. In November 1952 the consul general departed and Everett Drumright replaced him. You may know of Drumright, who had been in China. Since July of 1951, he had been a counselor of embassy in New Delhi under Ambassador Chester Bowles. Another first tour officer there, who arrived the same month as Drumright, was Paul Kreisberg, who later would have a China connection.

Q: An old China hand.

BARNES: Right. Prescott Childs was a combination of very, very strict, very demanding and at one point he thought it was important to tell me that I should be more careful about the way I parted my hair. We got to be good friends and I saw them subsequently and so on. On the whole I would say it was a good experience. I felt I learned a lot about basics in the Foreign Service.

Q: I realize you were in a consulate general and a very junior officer. How did you see relations with India at that time? I am just thinking that, was it Krishna Menon was riding high.

BARNES: Not so high as he did somewhat later.

Q: But it was not the easiest of times, it never is, but...

BARNES: At the some time it was close enough to independence, independence having been '47 and '48, and some of the excitement that came with an old country that was a new country at the same time. Nehru was the dominant figure and I remember going to what was called Chapati Beach in Bombay and listening to Nehru talk. I also remember some of the people who were attempting to carry on the Gandhian tradition, both of non violence, but also the simple life. The problems were clear in the sense that Bombay had become home of sorts to refugees from Pakistan so there were a lot of squatters, a lot of slums and a lot of shanty towns. But my basic recollection at this point is more one of fascination and again a certain excitement of becoming in a small way involved in another society.

Q: When you were doing consular work, did you get involved with Indian authorities on consular matters?

BARNES: Occasionally, I did have some liaison responsibilities with the police, for example. The problems though were...well, there were not that many Americans who presented problems as such, although there was a fairly, not large, but not small American colony, a business colony, primarily missionaries as well. So I would say more of the standard consular problems. For a while we had regulations about the need to issue individual visas to seamen, something that came out of the 1951 Immigration Act and I so I ended up having to interview a lot of seamen. I would say having done consular work subsequently as well,

Q: You didn't end up seeing Americans in jail and that sort of thing?

BARNES: One or two had sort of brushes but nothing too serious. One American citizen died and I had to take care of that situation.

Q: I always think of the Indian bureaucracy as being difficult to deal with, in that it is a vast bureaucracy which is used to employ a lot of people.

BARNES: But it was my bureaucratic contacts or contacts in the sense of seeking help and so on. That worked OK.

Q: What about Indian society? Did you get involved with people?

BARNES: I got involved some, yes, partly through consular contacts. The Consul General would include us in what he was doing as would the deputy principal officer through some of the people in the USIS (United States Information Service) who had other contacts more on the cultural side through some of the American business people who were there. So it was in good part a mixing with Indians, less so Americans as Americans. The consulate group was fairly small..

Q: The Bombay consular district included what states?

BARNES: Well, it included the West Coast essentially from the state of Gujarat - where the earthquake took place not too long ago - I am giving the current names rather than the names at the time because the reorganization wasn't done until later in the decade. Maharashtra. Madhya Pradesh, which is inland, those are the three principle areas.

Q: Did you have French or Portuguese enclaves in your territory?

BARNES: I had Portuguese enclaves in Goa and a few, not that big in Gujarat. The French enclaves were under the East Coast. We took a trip to Goa and actually called on the Portuguese governor. Spent some time on the beach in Goa.

Q: Looking back on your political work, were we concerned at all about a Communist movement within India?

BARNES: Not seriously at that point. The section of what is now considered properly south India but at that stage was partly central India and partly south India, the state of Andhra Pradesh, the eastern part of that state had groups that are called Naxalites who were sometimes thought of as Communists. I am not sure whether they were Maoist in later jargon but were essentially rural based. It was the closest but that was sort on the border of our districts.

Q: I guess the Madras consulate covered Kerala...

BARNES: ...and Calcutta was covering West Bengal, which was the other communist influenced area in India.

Q: Kerala was one place I remember; now I never served in India, which was considered where the Communists were.

BARNES: They still are a force in Kerala and the sharing of power has gone back and forth between the Congress Party in Kerala and Communist. The Kerala Communist and for that matter, the West Bengal Communists didn't ever, what should I say, have much success in expanding their influence into other states. It was strong in only those two states.

Q: Did you get involved in the, what was it, later known as Bollywood?

BARNES: Bombay Hollywood? Just on the fringes. I believe it was getting started at that point, but no, not a lot.

Q: What was the language there?

BARNES: Bombay at that time, it was called Bombay State and as I said it covers now essentially the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, there was a later split on the so-called linguistic states principle. There are two principle languages were Gujarati and Marathi and I began on my own to try to learn some...FSI had no language training before I left and I got to the point I could manage the script and some fairly elementary language but it convinced me that I was at least going to try after that wherever I went to get some language training. I wasn't terribly successful at the beginning but subsequently I managed to do it.

Q: So in 1953 the Barneses are off to Prague. Following your plan!

BARNES: This was my plan. It was a good plan, you know, why shouldn't it work?

Q: So you were in Prague from when to when?

BARNES: Prague from December of 1953 until July of 1956. When I said I wasn't successful in language I was completely unsuccessful in getting language training before I went to Prague.

Q: How did you find language training? Often I've noticed myself, I have found that you put out a great deal about the society, the culture and all from your language teacher at the FSI. How did you find Prague?

BARNES: Well, since I didn't get language training before I went to Prague, I had to learn it on the spot. What I did there essentially I was the consular officer, a one person consular section, what I did there essentially, was to recruit my FSN (Foreign Service National, i.e., locally hired) staff and tell them I needed help and from the beginning to try to use as much Czech as I could. I had picked up a book so before I left the States. I did a little bit and I remember writing on the boxes that were packed that we sent to Prague. On some boxes I wrote "office" and on other boxes I wrote "home" and one of the first lessons my Czech staff gave me was I'd used the wrong word for "office". I had used in effect "institution," "office" in that sense and not office "office." So I that was the way learned.

We had a Czech maid servant who had some knowledge of English and worked for our predecessors, but I tried to always to speak Czech with her. By the time I left I could manage fairly well.

Q: Who was our ambassador while you were there?

BARNES: When we arrived George Wadsworth had just left and so there was an interregnum before Alex Johnson came [Editor's Note: Ambassador Johnson presented his credential for this his first ambassadorial post on December 31, 1953 and left post on December 29, 1957]. In fact, one of the nice things I would say about our beginning in Prague, we got to Prague in December. Have you ever been to Prague? It burns soft coal as its principle fuel and so in an otherwise drab as European winters made even more drab by clouds of coal.

The fact there was no ambassador and the fact that the Czech authorities, I have forgotten who hit whom first, but either the U.S. reduced size of the Czech mission in Washington or the Czechs reduced the size of the U.S. Mission in Prague, but we were cut to thirteen people just before we scheduled to arrive. That required giving up houses outside the compound, for the most part, where people had lived and bring everybody into the compound and converting chancery space into living quarters. For a period of about two or three weeks when we first arrived we were put up in the Residence before the Johnsons arrived and that was a very comfortable beginning compared with what we ended up later.

Q: Who was the DCM?

BARNES: There were a couple, two while we were there. The first was Nat King who left about six months or so after we got there and the second was Gary Anderson.

Q: I take it when you arrived, that relations with the Czechs were not...

BARNES: This was what? Six or eight months after Stalin's death and the thaw, so-called that began to take place in the Soviet Union took a year or two to get there and the Czech Communists at that point had the reputation of doing exactly what the Soviets did, almost as if it were a pattern, as if things were cut out and all the detailed instructions were given. They followed them slavishly and so if relations were bad between the U.S. and the USSR they were at least as bad and maybe even a bit worse. Well, whether that was an exaggeration or not, but in any case, no, it was not easy. We were followed wherever we went and one difference was that there were not travel restrictions imposed on us. For whatever reason, I don't know why, the U.S. imposed no travel restrictions on Czech diplomats at that point, so we could travel all over the country. We would be followed, but we were not restricted, whereas in Moscow and some other places you had limitations on where and when you could travel.

Q: Well, it's a pretty small country.

BARNES: Well, actually when you go from the German border to what was then the Soviet and now the Ukrainian border it's a good day's drive.

Q: Let's talk about your work first: what type of work were you doing?

BARNES: Consular, I was the consular officer with comparatively little visa work, mostly visas for officials coming to the embassy of the U.N. Mission and that sort of thing. Occasional visitors' visas, the one case that stands out in my mind was a case of a prominent Czech theologian, by the name of Framanka, who was invited to come here, I have forgotten whether it was the National Council of Churches or the Council of Churches or something of that sort. A certain amount of protection of Americans in jail, dual nationals basically. At the time we arrived there was a dual national who was a refugee in the embassy, someone who had worked in our consulate in Bratislava before it had been closed, imprisoned and managed to escape from prison and make his way across the country and reconnoitered the street in front of the Embassy, it is a very narrow street; police stationed outside and cars with the secret police as well. This individual named John Hvasta was able to reconnoiter the entrance to the Embassy, the gates, and slipped in when somebody was going out and caught the guards by surprise. The Embassy had a Czech receptionist right inside the gates. Obviously, under those circumstances responsible to the secret police more than to the embassy. She tried to stop him but he got past her and got up into the section of the embassy where the Americans were working.

We refused to surrender him to the Czech authorities for a period of, it must have been about four or five months, part of the time before we got there, part after we got there. We took turns, the small embassy staff in effect standing guard at night and locked John up in a secure area of the embassy. We were never sure, given the tense relations at the time whether we there would be an attempt to take him by force. As it turned out, we were able to negotiate his departure, so it worked out all right.

The other specific case I remember particularly is a woman, the daughter of one of the founders of the Czech Republic in 1918, a newspaper editor himself who died in prison. She remained in prison. I was able to visit her a couple of times and she was, before we left, allowed out, I think, allowed out of prison, stayed a while in the country and then subsequently left.

Q: Were there any attempts on our part to reunite families?

BARNES: People would come to the consular section who had families in the States, but for the most part though they were dual nationals and that was the difficulty. There were attempts but not a lot of success at that point.

Q: How did you find working with the Czech authorities?

BARNES: I had limited contact with them simply because of the fact that there were so little in the way of links between the two countries, practically no trade, for instance. The dual national question I was talking about, not much in the way of cooperation on that score. Essentially, quite formal, at best not very helpful, occasionally of some help. The arrangement that was negotiated, for example, for John Hvasta to leave was one of the few exceptions and that was more the ambassador's doing than mine. The exceptions were not much in the way of cooperation so it was pretty much at arm's length.

Q: In those days Prague was not a place where American tourists went?

BARNES: No. Travelers were basically anybody of Czech descent.

Q: How about when you traveled around? Was there a concern about provocations?

BARNES: A potential concern; just you needed to be alert to the possibility but during the period we were there, there were none. We as Americans, when we traveled tended to get, what shall I say, sort of a mixed welcome from the Czechs. On the whole, I am talking non-official, on the whole, very friendly simply because we were Americans, at the same time somewhat cautious lest their own authorities raise questions about you know, why they were even for a while associating with Americans.

I remember when a music festival we went to the eastern part of the country where we were quite openly welcomed as Americans and they never seemed to have that much in the way of inhibitions.

Q: Did you get involved in federal benefits, social security payments, and that sort of thing?

BARNES: These were sort of routine type things, tracing people, trying to confirm things.

Q: To get out of country, where did you go, to Munich?

BARNES: We were dependent on the Army commissary facilities in what was then Western Germany, specifically in Nuremburg. We had a six ton truck which would take periodic trips to Nuremburg and come back with supplies, things we couldn't get locally. There was a great shortage of things in Prague at that point and the Mission had a small commissary. We just took turns driving out and getting the stuff loaded on and coming back. So that was the place we knew best. It was a little bit like just a change and nothing else aside from the work we'd do in regard with the commissary. Went to Vienna once or twice again for change, not so much for supplies.

Q: Well, Vienna was, this was rather an exciting period while you were there.

BARNES: It was the occupation still, but the treaty ending the occupation was in 1955.

Q: Was there any feeling that this might indicate a thaw?

BARNES: Yes, there was some hopes because, what was it, the spirit of Geneva that was also '55. And there was some slight relaxation in Czechoslovakia in terms of the stridency that began.

Q: Did you ever sort of discuss about why was Czechoslovakia such a, kind of a hard line place compared say even to Poland and so many other places where there seemed to be much more, they didn't take things as seriously.

BARNES: We talked among ourselves but I don't think anybody came up with any terribly clear explanation. If you want to make a connection, just sort of thinking out loud, the Czech Revolution in 1989 and it was called the Velvet Revolution, I don't know if there is a link here somewhere, a less strident, or less violent approach.

Q: Now Alex Johnson was one of the major figures in the Foreign Service. How did you find him as an ambassador?

BARNES: At one level, very professional and clearly someone who, what should I say, he knew what he wanted to do and why he wanted to do it. At another level, cold, not great on what I would call staff relations, somewhat aloof but then perhaps that was my vantage point as consular officer as distinct from others who were doing more "substantive" stuff.

Q: Well, I would thinking this environment the political officers spent most of their time reading newspapers, didn't they?

BARNES: Yes, in good part although also comparing notes with colleagues and exchanging what they thought in this case we would have Pravo, which was the equivalent of Pravda was saying or meant. For the rest of us too, not only the political officers, much of our life was within the diplomatic corps and a lot of exchange of what you call analysis at one level but gossip at another. We had a very good first secretary political officer, Jack Iams, who was something of a mentor for me.

Q: Was the Soviet presence pronounced there?

BARNES: Not very visible, no. There was a huge monument overlooking the river to the glorious Red Army. The Czechs have something of a sense of humor and the standard Czech version, at least that we heard, was the presence - as part of the sculpture - the presence of figures symbolizing the people of Czechoslovakia and their solidarity with the Great Soviet Union. The Czech version of that was that they were lined up behind the Soviet figures in order to push them into the river when they could get the chance.

Q: Did you get involved at all with the people trying to defect or to give you information or anything like that?

BARNES: No, I didn't and I don't remember, this goes back to provocations and so on. No, I don't remember any of that.

Let me go back to Alex for a moment; one example. Prague has sort of an historic center which was called the Old Town, very narrow streets, and attractive squares and so on. As I mentioned, we were followed regularly, drive out of the embassy compound and right across this narrow street was enough room for a couple of Czech cars called Tatra which were a large car. They always had an antenna which indicated they were a secret police car and they would just sort of fall in line and would follow you as you left, particularly the first secretary I mentioned.

I sometimes got tired of this type of surveillance and so we would drive into the old town and because of the configuration of the streets, if you sped up a little bit you'd go into one of the squares and we would sort of keep going around and around. That attracted onlookers who were trying to figure out what we were doing, could see the Tatra following us and sort of a measure of some amusement to these people who watched. A Tatra has a limited turning radius and so what we would do once in a while when we had gone around a couple of times is suddenly go off in one of these streets off the square and then because there's probably an intersection only a hundred meters away, we would get to the next place, turn and because they couldn't keep up us so by the time they got to where we had last been seen, we were gone.

Alex thought that was probably not such a great idea and he told us to stop playing games. He was probably right.

Q: I am told in Moscow that they play those games. If your car was parked somewhere you would have a deflated tire.

BARNES: That happened with my friend I mentioned, the first secretary once in Prague and what he then did was to break the antenna off the Tatra. Why they didn't retaliate, I don't know but we did cool it a bit.

Q; By the time you left did you see, relations were pretty much a deep freeze, weren't they?

BARNES: Actually, there was a bit of a thaw. More, I would say, about a year or so, about 1954 toward '55 partly as a result of Geneva. Khrushchev was coming into office at that point and that began to bear change. Malenkov was on his way out. Yes, it was less strident in terms of the tone and somewhat more civil in terms of the relationships.

Q: When you left there in '56, it sounds like it was about time to go back to the States.

BARNES: It wasn't as it turned out. I had decided at that point that I wanted to go to Moscow and take advantage of my Russian and my Russian Institute background. I applied for the course then given at the Army Language School in Oberammergau. Its school to Garmisch, called Attachment R at that stage for Russian. So in the summer of '56 my tour in Prague was curtailed and we transferred to Oberammergau for a year.

Q: How did you find that training?

BARNES: Very good, very good. I was able to get into it because I had had Russian at Columbia and passed an entrance exam, in fact a Russian entrance exam and so. It is a two year course for the Army and a one year course for the State Department people who took it but the State Department people had to have had some Russian before they went. It was conducted all in Russian that meant it was like an immersion process, except you did not have to speak Russian at home. Otherwise, very, very good.

Q: Did you get a good feel for your military colleagues?

BARNES: Yes, actually none of us were there at the same time. Some eventually did go to Moscow. I got a sense of people, mostly Army but one or two naval people who thought an intelligence career, in effect was something they wanted to do.

Q: Well, then you were in language school from '55 to '56.

BARNES: From summer to summer.

Q: And then to Moscow?

BARNES: I was delayed getting to Moscow because of housing shortages. Instead of going fairly quickly, we didn't get to Moscow until the early part of '57 and I had some time on the Soviet desk.

Q: Then you were in Moscow from '57 until?

BARNES: February, the end of January of '57 until February of '59.

Q: Who was our ambassador then?

BARNES: Chip Bohlen when I just got there but only for a couple of months. He left later that spring and Tommy Thompson. [Editor's Note: Ambassador Bohlen served in Moscow from April 1953 to April 1957. His successor Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson served from July 1957 to July 1962.]

Q: What was your job?

BARNES: I was the publications procurement officer.

Q: Oh, yes. Could you explain what that?

BARNES: Sure. Essentially I was a book buyer on behalf of U.S. Government entities ranging from the (Central Intelligence) Agency to the Library of Congress, since it was impossible to get Russian books of all sorts essentially outside the Soviet Union, I supposed some could be found in Western Europe. All I had to do was to in effect sort of memorize the requirements of the various agencies, plus I periodically got shopping lists. Look for this, look for that and be in the interesting position of becoming a preferred customer in Moscow bookstores because I would help them fulfill their plan. It was a great job because I had to learn my way around Moscow. I had to learn my way to various provincial cities as well because there was interest in publications in Leningrad or Kiev, but also because things that might be sold out in Moscow for one reason or another you might be able to pick up in other places, so much of my time was spent traveling.

Faced the usual travel problems, of course. When earlier I was comparing Czechoslovakia with Moscow, I had in mind was that in Moscow you had to file forty eight hours ahead of time, you didn't know until the last minute if whether you were going to be able to go. You couldn't drive outside twenty five kilometers of Moscow without permission and if it was a question of plane or train, you'd only get tickets through the state agencies. So you were stuck a good part of the time. So you planned and maybe you went and maybe you didn't. On the whole, I got out a fair amount.

About the second half of my career there, I got involved in cultural exchanges as a de facto like an assistant cultural officer. There was one USIA officer there who took on those responsibilities as a result of those called the Lacy-Zarubin agreement in late '57 - '58 setting the framework for exchanges between the U.S. and the USSR; the Khrushchev thaw period. The opportunities opened up quite rapidly and so it was useful to have a second person, so I worked on student exchanges, I worked on a composers' exchange, an artist exchange. I had a chance to meet Russians in a way I didn't other than my book experience and I also traveled with some of these delegations so that added to my experience.

Q: Let's go back to the book thing first. I would think, I mean obviously you were trying to get published information for information services, I mean you can call them intelligence, but it's farther than that. The Soviets knew what we were doing, did you have any problems?

BARNES: No. I can't be sure, that when I asked for something and was told it was not in stock, or not available, it might have been available, if I had been Russian. On the other hand, my general impression as I say, was I was looked upon with favor in trying to get things or things would be held for me rather than the other way around.

Q: Did you go in and say, "If such and such comes in, could you call me?"

BARNES: Yes. Sometimes they would keep things for me because they knew sort of the pattern. I was interested for example in economic development across the board and there were specialized bookstores which tended to do more in certain areas than in others and so they would know something of my pattern and would say, "We've held this for you. Is this something you would be interested in?" As well as making a note and saying, "I'll let you have it if it comes in."

Q: Were you interested in provincial newspapers too, or were those probably gotten by the translation service.

BARNES: Provincial newspapers we did get some of that and it sort of served as a forwarding agency.

Q: Were there many English or French books, German books, translated into Russian?

BARNES: There were some books primarily in technical fields and some literature, but since I wasn't interested in non-Russian books, I really didn't pay that much attention.

Q: I was told by one of my Yugoslav staff at the embassy, this was just a few years later, "Go to the big bookstore in Belgrade and look under agriculture" and there sure enough was a book called, in English called Animal Farm by George Orwell. (laughter)

Did you find a different attitude when you would go to Kiev or Tashkent or wherever you were going into these stores for buying? Or was it pretty much the same?

BARNES: It varied somewhat; some hesitancy in some places, particularly places where Americans didn't show up that often, hesitancy, puzzlement, and so on but on the whole, fairly friendly. Again in Moscow I had what was in effect a business relationship with a number of bookstores and was a known quantity. In the provinces I would be there less often, in some places I ended up going only once during my tour, some places a couple of times. It was not quite comparable. I think there would always have to be a certain amount of reserve in the back of people's minds just in case. I never concealed the fact that I was from the American Embassy.

Q: I was wondering whether when you went to stay at overnight hotels and all that, were you sort of put at a special table or things of that nature?

BARNES: No, but again it was probably prudent on the part of Soviet citizens not to associate with foreigners. For our part we of course, had been trained to be a little wary. Only once I took a chance and took somebody up on, somebody who had been connected with a bookstore. He invited me out to dinner and it was one of these places where the lines sort of went through the middle of the town in terms of what was acceptable for foreigners to visit and what wasn't. I asked this particular individual was it OK for me to step across that line a hundred meters or something like that. He said yes with enough assurances so I didn't end up worrying.

Another time when I was with a colleague of mine from the embassy, an economic officer, he had a camera and we got stopped because he was accused of filming something that supposedly wasn't filmable. He obviously didn't think so; I have forgotten if it was a mosque in Central Asia, or a market or what not. They eventually let us go, but nothing much more serious than that. With one exception which I will tell you later.

Q: On the cultural exchange side, one of the things that, there seemed to be an imbalance between Americans going over to the Soviet Union, mainly for culture, language and that type of thing whereas the Soviets seemed to send older people going over for hard sciences. Were you finding this?

BARNES: This was pretty much toward the beginning of the exchanges and they tended to be if not precisely reciprocal, pretty close to reciprocal. They had to be reached, the planning had to be done on the mutual basis, at least the principle of such and such a group would be exchanged for such and such a group.

What you are talking about came somewhat later, when it was somewhat easier to move back and forth and that's an accurate characterization of the composition, but as I mentioned before among the first delegations, there were activities in the areas of education - fairly broadly defined, music, art. We had the Philadelphia Orchestra come. So initially, there was more culture.

Q: Were you able to using this I mean just on your own with your wife and all to penetrate into the sort of intellectual, cultural scene of Moscow?

BARNES: Very hard and one of the advantages of these new, at the time, cultural exchange was that that got us into some of the activities that the delegation were involved in. On our own, for example, I don't think we probably could have gotten Soviet citizens to be allowed to accept invitations to our apartment but we organized something for a delegation and then they would come. They probably all come at the same time and all leave at the same time. There were certain artificialities that way. But we got a sense of at least some aspects of the intellectual cultural life through these delegation visits. We could follow up on some of that afterwards.

Q: How was Tommy Thompson as an ambassador?

BARNES: I have to think of accurate enough words; at one level, very relaxed. Clearly, very much at home in terms of the nature of the...I just had one thing that goes back to Prague for a moment. I mentioned earlier my interest in languages and also the problems of getting language training from the Foreign Service at least up through Prague and so aside from asking my consular section staff to talk in Czech with me whenever possible, I also did a certain amount of studying on my own and at one point Jack Iams, the first secretary told me that I was spending too much time on language and not enough time on sort of the substance of things. Even though I was a consular officer I had to be spending more time learning more about the political economic context of the country. He was both a good friend as well as a mentor, so I took him seriously on it.

Q: While we are at it and going back to that, all of a sudden I realize we'd missed something rather big and that was the Hungarian Revolution. It was October of '56.

BARNES: I was in Washington at that point. This was that rather long interim between finishing at Oberammergau and going on to post.

One other Czech element; again it was related to language. My wife is a novelist, I should say a would-be novelist and was working currently on a novel, part of which was set in Czechoslovakia and this turned out to be useful when I had been able to revive some knowledge of Czech because I act as a part time interpreter for her when we go to Czechoslovakia.

Q: Back when you were doing the cultural exchanges in the USSR, how did this work? Who came up with lists?

BARNES: It was essentially intergovernmental. There was an office in the State Department in the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR) which was called the Office of Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff (EUR/SES), headed initially by William Lacey and subsequently by Frank G. Siscoe for a number of years. The Russians had as their counterpart the State Committee for, I think, it was called Cultural Exchanges, maybe there is another adjective in there. If it was a more specialized question the actual arrangements were made from, in case the Soviets for example might be carried out by the Ministry of Higher Education for student exchanges, the Union of Composers for the composer exchanges, the Union of Writers for the writers and that sort of thing, but under the general supervision of the State Committee for Exchanges. Each side would make proposals in a fairly formal fashion to the other although the two embassies played something of an intermediary role, both in terms of ideas for the respective headquarters and occasionally would suggest ideas to each other.

The Embassy's involvement, in this case in Moscow, was essentially to serve as liaison with the organizing group to vet the program, to share ideas with the Office of Exchanges and the states and through them to the delegation that was coming and then in effect to serve as an escort officer for the delegation when the delegation got there, which ranged all the way from being sometimes a part time interpreter to being a trouble shooter and trying to iron out problems when they happened or to anticipate problems.

Q: Did you have any difficulty with groups coming?

BARNES: No difficulty with the Americans as such, that I remember. Some people obviously much more interesting and more flexible and others somewhat less so but on the whole, most of them saw themselves as a sort of pioneer and were interested in trying to make as much of the opportunity as they could. Where we could be helpful essentially, was giving them a sense of what they were getting into and as I say, if there were problems to try to help solve them. The problems were more in terms of Russian hosts who wouldn't always, usually for, from their standpoint I suppose, security reasons said we couldn't do this, we couldn't do that. So deviations from the agreed program were not always easy to work out.

Q: Now this was a time when Khrushchev had come over to visit Eisenhower and you know, things were looking pretty good, weren't they? Was there sort of an optimistic feel?

BARNES: Yes, there was a sense that, what had been described in the mid-'50s, say '55, '56, as the thaw, in fact there was a work by a Soviet author named Ehrenburg with that title. There was a feeling that things were getting better and could get still better, not very much better, but still the tendency was more hopeful and the exchanges that I was talking about were essentially an expression of that and were a visible sign.

If you had something like the U.S. sending the Marines into Lebanon, this prompted, in '58 the government to organize vast demonstrations outside the American Embassy.

Q: What did you do? I mean, were these sort of rent-a-mob type demonstrations?

BARNES: Yes, certainly in that sort of situation it was, I suppose something closer to home. I wasn't there for the U-2 incident in 1960. I can imagine the U-2 would prompt demonstrations.

Q: Did you get to just plain travel or was it pretty much connected with business?

BARNES: Pretty much connected with business, although occasionally depending on the delegation, my wife would come along as well to the Caucasus say, or to someplace. I did one trip to the Caucasus which was partly business, partly pleasure with a couple from the British Embassy. We arranged to rent some horses and to go by horseback across the hump of the Caucasus, the mountains from what is now not far from Chechnya over to the part of Georgia which is on the Black Sea. And then the embassy had a dacha outside Moscow and we would take turns going to. That was sort of a interim R&R type thing.

One thing I think that afflicted and infected all of us was the strain of living in an atmosphere where you were to some extent the enemy and continued to be portrayed as such. There was a Soviet humor magazine called Krokodil which specialized in anti-American cartoons. In my own case I know what signaled to me that I was feeling the pressure was I started throwing things which I don't ordinarily do and so took advantage of an opportunity a couple of months later to go out to Western Europe for about ten days just to get a change and at least what was known in the diplomatic corps, at least the western diplomatic corps as a breath of fresh air before you came back into it.

Q: Speaking of which, we've had this observation from, for decades, almost fifty years of looking at the Soviet Union and it was considered to be the great menace and all that but it in 1989 or 1991-92 sort of collapsed. Was there any feel that this was a place that wasn't working? I mean looking at the nationality problem, looking at the economics particularly, or was there a feeling this would go on forever?

BARNES: Nationality...you know, the Soviet had a motto as saying "national in form socialist in content," probably because in wandering around bookstores and so on, I also sometimes went into bookstores that specialized in books in the let's say the republic's language. I would sometimes buy Ukrainian books; I would sometimes buy Uzbek books and so on so I got a little bit of feel through that of what it was like to be a non-Russian. There was more than I would have expected, I think of some of the pride and also a defensiveness that is, trying to protect yourself as somebody who is different from the Russians. So in that sense, I wouldn't have thought of it in later day context.

In terms of society functioning, it was clear that provisions of food were at best limited, particularly during the winter. It was clear that housing was a real problem. It was clear that whether because of bureaucracy, inefficiency, or technical incompetence, various things didn't work well. But I think it would be more than I could do to make the jump from there to the collapse of later years.

Q: I mean we all, in one way or another observing this and yet it sort of happened.

BARNES: But if you were there in the '80s you would have had a clearer sense of impending change. That's what I don't know. I went back only once after we left, no twice after we left Moscow; one fairly close to the time we left and one while I was in Bucharest in the mid-'70s so I didn't have a sense of the Soviet Union in the '80s.

Q: Did you feel that you were joining a band of brothers at that time by being in the Soviet thing?

BARNES: Yes, we were all called area specialists or area language officers. We all in a way were students of the society and we were all in some way pushing the realm of the possible particularly the exchanges program. In fact, one of my colleagues was forced to leave at one point when the Soviets contended he was sort of overdoing contacts with university students.

Q: Who was that?

BARNES: John Baker

Q: Yes, I interviewed John.

BARNES: On one of the trips I took to Kiev I met the director of the Kiev Opera and Ballet. Although I didn't know at the time I met him - until somewhat later when we saw each other in Moscow, which was a little bit unusual to have somebody from the provinces look you up - but, he happened to be Khrushchev's son-in-law and he was obviously interested in me as a possible contact to the United States. He wasn't exactly indiscreet but on the other hand he didn't try to hide that much of the fact that we knew each other and I reported all this to Tommy Thompson from time to time. We were due to leave Moscow in January of '57. I was supposed to go back and work on the Soviet desk at the Department but had asked, and Tommy had agreed, to stay on until spring in part because of one of our children being in school there and in part because I just found what I was doing in a different cultural side to be interesting.

One fine day, a youth newspaper, Komsomolskaya Pravda, published an article about, I don't know if this works in Serbian or not, (Russian phrase), "The Packer of Tchaikovsky Street." The article began by saying, "If you walk along Tchaikovsky Street along about number 19/21 you may hear some strange noises coming from the basement of that building and what's going on there? That's where "Harrigay Baruness" (Russian rendition of "Harry Barnes") is working and he buys all these books and he packs them up in crates and sends them off, who knows what sort of interesting purposes" and so on. Satire, basically but by fingering me raised some questions and this led to my consulting with Tommy who was consulting with me and he concluded that this was probably a way of warning me, that also may have been a warning to Khrushchev's son-in-law in some form. Khrushchev was very much in power at that point.

So Tommy's advice was don't stick around, you don't know what will happen next and in fact, not long before that, the Deninsiya [Russian word possibly means 'plainclothesman'] had seen this guy who had given me some information to pass on about, at one level fairly harmless, but at another level not just about some of the problems the country was facing, general economic problems, it was critical. That was not a good thing to do. We were with a delegation of artist, I think at that point, and was scheduled to go into on to the Caucasus from Kiev and I told my wife, we were on the plane, I figured nobody ever would overhear us on the plane about this conversation, and both she and I began to worry a bit about who might know about the conversation from their own listening devices. Was I likely to be the target of anything as we continued to travel? So there was a period of some nervousness until we got back to Moscow and I was able to talk to Tommy. That was the anecdote I wanted to add for the end of the Moscow.

I thought of something I want to mention about Moscow. I came into the Foreign Service having been told that if I didn't take my appointment at the time it was offered I wouldn't get another one, another chance for a couple of years, if then. If this was a scare tactic, I don't know., but I left Columbia University's Russian Institute with only one year of a two year program completed. What happened in Moscow a couple of months before I left, I ran into the head of the Russian Institute who was then visiting Moscow. He said to me, "Why don't you finish your Russian Institute program and get your M.A.?" When I got back to the States, in that period in the early '59 or so, I began to explore what I could do to accomplish that. It turned out I didn't make use of the information until a couple of years later but I was told that they had a statute of limitations for completing the degree program once started but that had been adopted after I had left Columbia so therefore it didn't apply to me. Eventually, I completed the M.A. at Columbia by commuting from Washington to New York. By this time it was 1968.

Q: Today is May 3, 2004. Harry, you were on the Soviet desk from when to when?

BARNES: From spring of 1959 until the summer of 1962. I went to the National War College 1962 to '63.

Q: So we are talking about '59 to '62. And this was a period of not the greatest relations with the Soviet Union. Again we are talking about the Cold War. Compared with your Moscow assignment, what was the perspective from Washington? Did you find a different perspective on relations?

BARNES: Let me answer that a little indirectly and give you a little bit of context.

I assume at some point during our previous conversation talking about my assignment in Moscow I had talked about the fact that I had been involved along with another colleague of mine in what was essentially an incipient cultural section of the embassy in Moscow because there had been an agreement in 1958 that was called the Lacy-Zarubin agreement, that provided for some of the first exchanges with the then USSR.

My job on the Soviet desk was essentially that of liaison with the then again quite new European Bureau office which deal with East West exchanges. It was called SES, Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff and I was almost another staff member for that office but working out of the Soviet desk. I also had the responsibility of being the individual who knew the State Department who had to pass on the requests from the Soviet Mission in Washington or the Soviet U.N. delegation for travel outside where they were located. This was a reciprocal arrangement because of the restrictions that had been placed on our people in Moscow. That wasn't very odorous but most of my time then, as I said was spent on the exchanges and there I would say going back to your question, there was an interest, I would say, a willingness to try to see how far we could get in terms of promoting exchanges with the idea of providing Americans an opportunity to spend some time in the Soviet Union and to have some Soviets come to the United States. The calculated risk I suppose one might say that was taken at that time was that on balance exchanges were in our interest as an open society, less so in the Soviet interest, but that because we felt we might gain more, we were prepared to push and to look into what could be accomplished.

In the process, in 1962 I was asked to go with a U.S. cultural group as an escort officer so in a bit it was like what I had done when I was in Moscow. This happened to be a group of university musicians from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and it was called the University of Michigan Band and they did a variety of things; classical, popular, Americana type things and I spent the better part of five weeks, five-six weeks touring with them in effect as a, almost like the manager of the orchestra. Not that I was a musician myself but the director was very much, a man named William Revelli, but I was the one who had some background in the Soviet Union, having been there fairly recently, I had some idea of how to deal with the Soviet bureaucracy which of course, was somewhat concerned about having these young American students sort of loose in the Soviet Union so we had people escorting us, keeping track of us as it were. My job in part, as I say, was to share with the students, with the director and his staff my sense of the country, warning about some of the possible pitfalls and then if complications arose, to try to sort out what the complications were. The complications were fortunately never very serious, except the Soviet guides did express concerns that we didn't keep enough track always of our own people. They expressed this concern ostensibly because they wanted to protect us to make sure we didn't fall in with bad company and so on. On the whole, the students got a lot out of it and I think they contributed a lot to the people they met as giving a sense of what young America was like which was rather different from ordinary, what ordinarily they got in the Soviet media.

Q: This was quite early on in the exchange, wasn't it?

BARNES: Yes, because the agreement was a '58 agreement and it began to be implemented in '59 and so I am talking about the third year or so of the agreement.

Q: Who was the head of the Office of Soviet Affairs during your assignment?

BARNES: Several people during the time I was there. I think when I first arrived, it was John Guthrie who had been in the Embassy in Moscow before going back to that job and then before I left it was Bob Owen. We were divided into two sections; bilateral affairs and multilateral affairs. I was in the bilateral part.

The other person to bear in mind because he was the one in charge of the cultural exchange program, the SES, was Frank Siscoe.

Q: You were monitoring who the Soviets were sending over?

BARNES: Well, that was more the job of the SES staff to work out the modalities for an exchange. For example, programs for Soviet students coming to American universities counterpart to the Americans who had begun to go to the Soviet Union in '58. There were negotiations about itinerary, where they could go or where they couldn't go. The Soviets at that point had large areas of their own country closed to foreigners, very often particularly Americans, and so if we wanted to have say, something like this cultural group I was describing go to a place that was closed, the Soviets would probably refuse, although they might say, "All right, then you let one of our groups go someplace in the United States which you have closed, because our closings are essentially retaliatory or reciprocal". Not that there was anything necessarily that important militarily but it was part of the tit for tat type game that we played at that time.

Q: When you were on the Desk, we had the election of 1960, this was when Nixon and Kennedy ran against each other. As Soviet experts did you kind of wonder how are they going to deal with things. How did you feel about it?

BARNES: I can't be very precise on that, except there was speculation you might anticipate anyway what would be the consequences of one or another. President Nixon, of course, had had his own experience in Moscow as vice president. I wasn't there at the time. Kennedy, as I recall, had no particular experience with Eastern Europe. If my memory is right, was it 1960 that the U-2 was shot down?

Q: Yes, it was when Eisenhower was president and I want to say the spring of '60.

BARNES: That of course, cast something of a shadow on the relationship, not that it was all that great, but it was sometimes called a thaw as you could surmise by the cultural exchanges agreement and there had been a book published in the Soviet Union, I have forgotten if it was clandestine or not, called The Thaw by Ilya Ehrenburg which reflected the changes that had begun to take place after Stalin's death. I guess I can't go much further than to say there was speculation of those who were working on Soviet affairs as to what difference would come about as a result of the election.

Q: I know when I talked to people who were in Berlin at the time the Kennedy administration came in they expressed some nervousness because the Kennedy Administration was talking about well, is Berlin that important and all that sort of thing. As you know, a new administration comes in and the new people have a tendency to speculate and shoot off their mouths before they are up against...

BARNES: If they do something different because it wasn't done by the previous administration.

The only other thing I remember from that period, the first years of the Kennedy administration, was the Cuban Crisis. By that time I was at the War College, but I remember listening to the radio, going to and from the college, and hearing the announcements and beginning to wonder whether and when it would be a real conflict, an armed conflict with the Soviet Union.

Q: This was I think in October of '62. With the exchange program, how did you see things developing? Did you feel it was making sense?

BARNES: I would have to say I was probably prejudiced, having worked with some of the first exchange groups and having seen the visible impact, be they artists or composers or students. I thought this was a very good area for the U.S. to focus on and try to expand. My sense of Soviet exchanges, Soviet citizens coming to the U.S., was much more indirect, even though I was working on the exchanges part time when I was on the Soviet desk. I didn't have the opportunity usually to spend much time with the Soviet visitors, so I would have to qualify my judgment perhaps a little bit that way. Both because I thought that they were in themselves beneficial for the United States and also because I thought it was worthwhile trying to take advantage of whatever slight evidence there might be or slight movement there might be in the Soviet Union to open up. I remain very much a partisan.

Q: Did you pick up any feel about Khrushchev at this point? Was he considered to be a moderating force or...?

BARNES: Khrushchev certainly, if only because of his decision to let initially party officials, but then this went beyond that, but some people in the Soviet Union have a sense of incomplete of what the Stalin era was like. It was definitely in my mind almost a revolutionary force in that context, not a revolutionary but he understood enough that something had to be known or had to be known by, made known by him in terms of his being able to do some of the other things he wanted. Secondly, there was a pragmatism about him which was to try to see how things can work. He had a slogan at one point of catching up with and surpassing the United States in the production of wheat, butter and milk, which they never got to, but that pushed them in the direction of well, how do you do some things that are quite tangible, that are of some interest to the population as a whole and not just to the party elite.

There was a, what should I say, actor I guess is the word I would use, there was a sense of being an actor about him. You may remember his banging his desk at the U.N. with his shoe and then you had to wonder then occasionally whether his sense of drama, or what he thought was required, would get in the way of his judgment. That was one of the things I worried somewhat about in that period of the Cuban Missile Crisis, if he had enough sense to pay attention to his pragmatic side or whether he was going to pay more attention to the dramatic side.

Q: When you were at the War College from '62 to '63 and the big thing of course, was the Cuban Missile Crisis. The military must have been sort of chaffing during the crisis. Was the attitude at the War College that there really may be a war?

BARNES: Yes, there certainly was concern that there could be, and in part I think because of the question what did the presence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba mean? They obviously weren't there for fun and if the Soviets had gone that far, either they underestimated us or they somehow thought they could get away with it. If they weren't worried, they should have been, one would have thought. And then the second obvious question that people talked about a lot, and was equally true of much of American society at the time, was how do you stop something that is already started? The next question was could you stop it and at what cost? Perhaps from my military colleagues' part, fascination, but not how did it ever come about, but how is it going to end? And how can it end in our favor? Secondly, there were some who were worried about whether the Soviets were smart enough to realize that maybe they shouldn't go any further than they had already gone.

Q: What did you feel you gained from the War College?

BARNES: Let me see if I can describe it. In the first place I had had comparatively little connections with or exposure to people in our military. In Moscow there were the military attachés whom I knew well and my previous Eastern European post, Czechoslovakia, also there were also military attaches. I had the sense of the attaché side of things but nothing beyond that and therefore the opportunity during that year to be with people from all the services in a variety of situations, plus some of the visits organized for us too: Air Force wings, flying to a carrier, briefings by military people, gave me a much fuller sense than I would have otherwise obtained, in that sense a dimension that I would find useful in the future situations. I simply would be able to be alert to, know where to look for example, for ideas. Somewhere between analysis and synthesis of developments. To the extent that there may have been built in a certain amount of questioning between people in State, people in Defense about each other's ability to really understand international problems. I soon got over that because I was impressed with the caliber of the people at the college and their openness toward me as a Foreign Service Officer.

Q: In the summer of '63 where did you go?

BARNES: I went to Kathmandu. I probably said it in earlier discussions that I'd come into the Foreign Service with an academic background, partially completed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Going back to the War College, the most useful application of some of that sense of the military that I was mentioned I was able to use a number of years later when I was in Chile and when there was a military dictatorship, so that exposure hung on, it was available to me for some period of time.

Although I had the Eastern European interest, and wanted to continue that, you will recall my first post was actually Bombay and that was because of an interest in that part of the world and in the developing world more broadly. At some point during that time in Bombay my wife and I had met a couple Nepalese, who were in exile at that point and told us if they ever got back to Nepal, we ought to come visit them, very tempting at that point to happen to get back fairly soon after that period of change. Because it was still very much, not quite the Korean hermit kingdom, but very limited links with the outside, partly British policy to a certain extent and Indian policy. So in looking around for an assignment after the War College, I happened to hear that the DCMship in Kathmandu was opening up (DCM: Deputy Chief of Mission, the second ranking officer in an embassy). My personnel counselor, I don't remember the exact date if that is important, said, "Well, the ambassador to Kathmandu is going to be in town next week and I'll alert him to your interest. Why don't you arrange to see him and see whether he will be interested in you as a candidate?"

It was Henry Stebbins who subsequently went on to be ambassador to Uganda [Editor's Note: Ambassador Stebbins served in Kathmandu from November 1959 to June 1966.]. I'm still not quite sure to this day why he thought I would make a good DCM. Somebody once speculated to me that my predecessor was a much more senior, much older individual than I, I was 37, something like that. And maybe Ambassador Stebbins wanted a change. Whether he operated on too little knowledge or too much knowledge or what; he said, "OK." I told him I wanted to get some Nepali language training before I came to Kathmandu and use the period between the completion of the War College and when I had to report to Kathmandu, there was a period of two months or so. He agreed to that.

I started looking around and found out the only place that summer where Nepali was available was the Peace Corps training program. The Peace Corps just got started in those years and this was a training program for the second group of volunteers being held at the University of Oregon, Eugene.

It turned out to be somewhat more complicated than I had anticipated getting into the program. A very rough analogy of the relationship between Foreign Service officers and the military... I was saying there was some difficulty getting into the program simply because the people in the Peace Corps were suspicious of people in government and particularly people in the State Department.

After talking to a variety of people they appeared to be convinced that I wasn't dangerous or subversive, so I was allowed to take part in the program and did everything except the last two weeks or so, which was the outward bound experience in Colorado, because by that time I needed to be in Kathmandu.

The great advantage had been very roughly comparable to what I learned at the War College, the advantage was the Peace Corps training assignment is that I ended up with about twenty five some good friends, who were being assigned pretty much all over the country and when they arrived in Kathmandu, we were already there and they were in Kathmandu for a week or so, so we had the chance to see them before they went out to their post. My wife had the chance to meet them and they, her as well. We told them that when they came back to Kathmandu, the ones who weren't assigned to Kathmandu, that they were to feel they could stay with us or come by, whatever they wanted. We, for our part, made a lot of trips to visit Peace Corps volunteers because it was the first, I'm sorry the second group of volunteers in the country and it was important to have a sense of how they were managing. Since communications at that point were limited to the southern part of the country and only in certain parts of the southern part of the country were passable roads, if you wanted to get to remote, say district towns where there were the sorts of places they volunteered for assignment, you had to walk, although occasionally, it was a place that had a landing strip, you could hitch a ride with AID's plane or AID's helicopter. We not only saw the volunteers in Kathmandu but visited all twenty some outside of Kathmandu. That gave me a dimension to a way of understanding what was happening in the country that would have been almost impossible otherwise.

Q: How did the Peace Corps seem to cooperate during that time?

BARNES: A lot of enthusiasm and to some extent therefore some frustrations of trying to figure out what the right role for a volunteer was. The training program was designed for a developmental approach, that is, the volunteers would help in organizing, in planning activities that would be relevant to the needs of the community where they were. They were not expected to be agronomists or hydrologists but to know enough about a variety of things so they knew where help could be sought if it could be sought.

I give them all a really very, very high mark for their imagination and for their persistence and their ability to help people, help Nepalese, think through some of their problems even though the backgrounds were obviously quite different. It says something for, shall I say, native or may be naive American enthusiasm and commitment.

The experience was sufficiently rewarding so that after some months the Ambassador and Mrs. Stebbins decided they would like to have a chance to see the volunteers, not only in Kathmandu but out in the field. They were both considerably older, as I mentioned, and so when they traveled they traveled by helicopter, got dropped off and got picked up to be brought back. But that in a sense double mission of the American Ambassador showing the flag as it were, because he had taken advantage to try to learn something about the community as well as what the volunteers were doing. The learning the Stebbins' experienced about what the Peace Corps volunteers could do, what some of the limitations were, was very valuable.

Q: Did any of them that you know come into the Foreign Service?

BARNES: Yes. I don't know if you have come across the name, Peter Burleigh who is now retired, I guess about two years or so ago, and served as Ambassador to Sri Lanka [Editor's Note: Peter Albert Burleigh was Ambassador to Sri Lanka from January 1996 to August 1997] and at one point was a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs covering the Persian Gulf and then, I forgot what the title was, was the second ambassador ranking at the U.N. Of the five or so he was the deputy to the principle, deputy principle representative to the U.N. He was one of that group of volunteers.

Q: You were Nepal from September '63 to July 1967. What was the political situation in Nepal while you were there?

BARNES: I mentioned earlier that Nepal was somewhat like a reclusive kingdom. That changed in 1960 when the monarchy was restored. I'm sorry, my chronology is off. The first change was 1950 when the monarchy was restored to some position of power. It had been a hereditary family of prime ministers. They were put aside and the king who had been in effect a figure head assumed a significant amount of power, a fair amount of Indian backing for that which was soon after India had won independence and parties were set up and elections held. The principle party called a Nepali Congress Party had a majority in the parliament but in 1959 the king, which was actually the son of the king who was restored, but the then fairly new king named Mahendra, decided to dispense with parliamentary democracy and to institute the royal rule. He devised his own system of local democracy called Panchayat; panch in Nepali means five and was a traditional form of local management, self government. It was to be a uniquely Nepali contribution to democracy. Hence, the Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) whom I was talking about earlier, when they came to Nepal were often known as Panchayat development personnel. PCVs sought to help Panchayat, local Panchayat with their problems.

The king exercised, what should I say, an authoritarian but not sort of totalitarian rule with the exception that he kept the Nepali Congress leaders in jail for a long, long time and he wasn't interested in elections other than ones that could be sufficiently controlled. It was not a thing that was overly oppressive.

The focus of U.S. relations with Nepal at that time stage was in part influenced by our difficult relations with the fairly new Communist Chinese government founded, of course, in the '50s. Nepal had a long border with China. There were a number, I don't remember the exact number, thousands anyway of Tibetan refugees. The border actually was the Tibetan-Nepal or China-Nepal border. There were Tibetan communities in a number of places in Nepal. Naturally, a fair amount of language similarity between what the Nepalese call Voces and Tibetan language, culturalized with Buddhism constantly being the predominant religion in the northern area along the border. Hinduism was the official religion in the rest of Nepal proper. So to some extent our interest in a stable Nepal, and to the extent king's rule had some elements of instability, produced some concerns on our part. This was the period when Nepal had to do with worries about potential Chinese interference.

Q: Had the Chinese invaded Tibet?

BARNES: Yes, and there had been an uprising in, had taken over in 1950 and there was an uprising in 1959 which brought a lot of refugees.

Q: And then of course on top of this, you had the 1960 Sino-Indian War.

BARNES: 1962, yes.

Q: We had helped the Indians at that point.

BARNES: That's right, yes. So we got there in effect almost a year after the Sino-Indian War.

Q: What were we doing with Nepal? Keeping a watching brief or...?

BARNES: That was one dimension. The second dimension was essentially an aid dimension primarily in the areas of agriculture, some local government tutelage. I mentioned the Panchiat. The AID (Agency for International Development) had a Panchiat development program and Peace Corps activities which were somewhat coordinated with AID's activities in trying to develop a system of local government that the Peace Corps folks could impact on what the village council couldn't do: working somewhat more broadly in terms of agricultural development, forestry development, some hydrological questions.

We had an interest as well in there being better relations between India and Nepal. The Nepalese, not surprising as a small country and with a completely open border with India, were nervous about Indian, you might say, pretensions. I think probably just the very fact that such a big country on their border made them somewhat nervous. In part that was because the southern strip of the country, an area called the Tari, sort of flatland, were regarded by people who were in large measure Hindi speaking or whatever the comparable Indian language was on the border. So, we in the Embassy in Kathmandu had to be clear that we were committed to Nepal's development, including eventual democratic development, as Nepal, we were not surrogates for India. On the other hand, in terms of our relations with India, we didn't want it to appear that we were trying to encourage or tolerate any sort of an anti Indian attitude toward India on the part of the Nepalese, so it was to some extent a cajoling, some extent attentive listening, to some extent a systems driven type relationship.

Q: How was India represented there? Was it a high commissioner?

BARNES: No, because Nepal was not a member of the British Commonwealth, so the high commission was an embassy. In fact the largest embassy in Nepal, not surprisingly.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Indian Embassy?

BARNES: On the whole, fairly easy, in part because I had had that previous experience in India, at least could relate somewhat to Indian interests and Indian concerns. I relied on the Indian Embassy also for information, quite simply by virtue of their size and varied sources of information. Again, like that open border. They tended to be well informed and in fact, in many respects better informed than we would be, so we could learn.

Given their recent experience, a border war with China, we tended to see pretty much eye to eye on the dangers posed by China, although I think probably Indians worried more about what they considered Nepalese naiveté^{1/2}. We thought probably the Nepalese were probably smarter than Indians sometimes gave them credit for.

Q: The Nepalese, did they have relations with China? Of course, at that time, we just weren't talking to China.

BARNES: Yes. We did not have contacts at that point, so our instructions were we weren't supposed to speak to the Chinese. The diplomatic corps in Kathmandu at that point was, I think, all of seven missions and so at diplomatic corps events it was hard to avoid the Chinese. The other missions were the Soviets, British, French, Germans, Pakistanis, and Indians, plus ourselves.

Q: Almost all of them had tense relations with one or the other.

BARNES: Well, of course, this was the Cold War still, so the Germans, the British, the French and ourselves were the Western group if you like. The Pakistanis and we...well, part of that time there was the Indo-Pakistan war of '65. But we had had, of course, the experience of, as you mentioned earlier, of providing assistance to the Indians in the border war but in '65 we were somewhat more neutral between India and Pakistan.

Q: Were the Chinese messing around there then? I mean, agents trying to subvert or that sort of thing?

BARNES: There were at the time, although not legal, two communist parties in Nepal, one of which was associated with the Soviets and the other associated with China. Of course, it was still a period of the so called Sino-Soviet split and the assumption was that the pro Chinese group got support, financial and otherwise from the Chinese, as the pro-Moscow group got support from Moscow, but nothing dramatic that I remember on either side.

The Chinese obviously had an interest in publicly showing that they were very supportive of Nepalese independence and sovereignty and so on, vis-a-vis, India. The Soviets had improved their relations at that stage with India and so they weren't particularly acting an anti-Indian mode, vis-a-vis the Nepalese.

Q: What was your impression of the Nepalese government and how it was operating?

BARNES: Well, it would change periodically as the king decided it wasn't performing according to his wishes. So there was a certain amount of revolving door, people going out and people coming back. The king operated sometimes directly with the prime minister, sometimes somewhat more indirectly through members of the palace staff who gave instructions to, be it the prime minister, or be it to the ministers, depending on where the palace's interests were. So parenthetically, one of the jobs I had was trying to get to know some of the people on the palace staff, as well as the people in government, a sort of rough analogy would be try to access some people in the NSC here.

Then, if my memory is right, two individuals served twice as prime minister during the time I was there, rotating, as it were. The degree of confidence, if I go by my recollections of what people in AID, be they specialists in public administration or in agriculture both said, "On the whole, we're pretty well impressed, pretty favorably impressed with their working level contacts," particularly in areas where there was a technical skill involved, people who perhaps had been trained in India, most likely, might have been trained somewhere else conceivably, in Europe or even in the U.S. So those working relationships were good and productive.

Ministerial level, more, should I say, varied in part had to do with the qualifications of the ministers themselves who would not necessarily be all that competent in the area to which they had been assigned by the king. The minister of agriculture would not necessarily been an expert in plant breeding or technical areas.

Secondly, the real limitations under which the new ministers had to operate because of the palace oversight or the palace interference. So I guess I would have to say it was a mixed picture, but on balance, again I go back to that Punchiat situation between the ministers and their staff and technical specialists. A good number of people who knew what they were doing, who knew what they were up against in the situation of limited resources, could be and often were imaginative in how to accomplish results.

Q: Did you find yourself involved in the care and feeding of mountain climbers?

BARNES: Less so than if I had gotten there a couple of months earlier when the first American expedition led by Jim Whittaker climbed Everest. That was in May of 1963. In a vicarious way because one of the Americans who made it to the summit, named Willi Unsoeld, subsequently became the director of the Peace Corps group in Nepal, so I saw a lot of him. There weren't that many in the first years after the Everest ascent, there weren't that many American expeditions. So to a limited extent developed a certain vicarious understanding of what it is like to be a mountain climber, if only because of all the trekking we did to see Peace Corps Volunteers but that was never to great heights. Willi led a group of us, about 1965, '66, up toward the base of Everest. That's the highest I got.

Q: Was Nepal a member of the United Nations and were we working with them on votes and all?

BARNES: Yes, but nothing stands out particularly in terms of issues. They tended to go along with the nonaligned movement and that we knew and that we understood. They did not want to appear to be, what to say, too close to the U.S. lest they compromise their nonaligned status. But on the other hand the U.S. presented the advantage of being neither Indian nor China and therefore they could do things with us particularly in the development area. I would have said for example, the local government program, Panchayat program could have been seen as too politically sensitive, but they didn't see it that way. At least they saw an advantage in of a U.S. presence in helping them out.

The one thing I remember that related to your question has to do with, at some point during the Vietnam War and I can't tell you for sure whether it was '65, '66 probably, the Pratinidhi Sabha, the House of Representatives, adopted a resolution critical of U.S. activities in Vietnam. I remember going to complain to somebody in the Foreign Ministry at that point arguing they should have the courtesy to tell us they were considering something like that, that they didn't agree with our Vietnamese policy. I emphasized, I was chargé d'affaires at the time, emphasized the fact that if they had to adopt the resolution without even telling us about it, why did they have to adopt it on the Fourth of July. I'm not sure my protest had much of an impact.

Q: This was during the sort of the great hippie movement and so many Americans and European kids were traveling all over and many were heading towards the sort of the subcontinent, both for drugs and for meditation and other experience. That must have affected you, didn't it?

BARNES: To some extent, although my recollection is that that became somewhat more pronounced toward the end of our tour. I tend to think it was more in terms of looking for uplifting or enlightening experiences than the drug side.

Q: I was wondering if you had problems with if an American got into trouble or not and how you might handle the issue.

BARNES: I don't recall that as being the major component of our work. Occasionally things happened and what you tried to do, first of all, since they would likely be held in a facility which in terms of, shall I say, comfort might be Spartan. So one of your first things to do was try to visit with the consular officer, visit the person who had been detained and try to clarify the basis on which they had been detained and what the chances were of being able to get them out of the country and back to the U.S., rather than have them land somewhere else. On the whole, the Nepalese were fairly cooperative. These sorts of consular problems were not desirable and were unhelpful, but they did not dominate our work load.

Q: Were there any major political developments in the '63 to '67 period?

BARNES: Not major. There continued to be hope that somehow the king might agree to more in the way of relaxation of some of the restraints or constraints but, no.

Q: Now you served as DCM for two ambassadors, right?

BARNES: My tour originally had been for three years so I should have left in '66, but then Ambassador Stebbins was transferred to Uganda in June of that year. There was an interregnum of about six months. The new ambassador was Carol Laise, who by that time had married Ellsworth Bunker and he, by that time was ambassador to Vietnam. I may have misspoken about the timing. If I am very precise, at the time that she was named as ambassador, she had not yet married Ellsworth Bunker. That's another story. So for the last six months I was there I had a new ambassador and many responsibilities that come with that. [Editor's Note: Ambassador Laise presented her credential in Katmandu on December 5, 1966 and departed post June 5, 1973. Afterwards, she took up duties as the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs on September 20, 1973. She married Ambassador Bunker on January 3, 1967.]

Did you ever know Carol?

Q: Yes, I did. I interviewed her some time ago but it was a relatively short interview. How did she operate?

BARNES: She was a person with very definite ideas, not bashful about expressing them; interested in a lot and wanting to learn, felt that she might be able to have some impact on the king. Speaking now as the DCM, that was always a challenge, for the most part it was an effort worth making. Henry Stebbins, which again was good from my stand point, gave me a lot of responsibility as the new DCM, which I very much appreciated and it could have been more cautious.

Carol also expected a lot of me, in part because I had been there a couple of years although she, from her own assignments in the area knew a lot about India in particular, but also knew something about Nepal. She was the sort of person with whom one could disagree but it was important to know why you disagreed and then make the case for what your views were.

To go back to the marriage, which is relevant here, she arrived in December of '66. Betsy and I meet her at the airport and went back to the Residence with her and then Betsey excused herself. Carol asked me to stay on and talk over a few things that had happened while she was en route and in Delhi. After we finished that I got up to leave and she said, "Sit down. I have a bombshell to drop." What went through my head was she was going to tell me no, she doesn't want me to be her DCM or something like that.

She said, "I'm going to get married. I want you to find a minister and from what I have heard, I don't want such and such a minister" who would have been the obvious possibility, a local. "Secondly, I want you to organize a reception for my husband-to-be, Ellsworth Bunker, and you can do that in honor of Ellsworth Bunker, the former U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, because when I served with him in Delhi he was accredited Kathmandu as well. And then thirdly, organize a wedding trip, a honeymoon trip." And then she added to this, "Don't tell anybody."

Fortunately we were expecting around Christmas time, the end of December a visit from Betsy's parents and Betsy's father happened to be a Presbyterian minister so that was solved quite easily. The wedding reception, she had already given a clue on how to do that so we could take care of that. The honeymoon we decided that the two of them would go to a place called Tiger Tops, located in a border area toward India which produces tigers sometimes, lets you ride around on elephants looking for them. We would tie that in with a visit to some Peace Corps Volunteers in the area. And it all worked quite well.

Q: While Carol Laise was Ambassador, did you see her, you know, influencing the king and also what would we try to influence the king about?

BARNES: I think two things: I did see her try trying to influence the king, also trying to influence the ministers for what that was worth, listening to a lot of people you get some sense of what trends might be. Two things; one, while recognizing Nepal's nonaligned status, trying to persuade the king and the government not to take gratuitous slaps at the U.S. and that's of course, a fairly fine line. How do you be nonaligned and say nice things about the United States, or not say too many critical things about the United States?

The second, which was tougher, was to try to exercise some, display some understanding of the king's situation, take him up to a point on his word if he was really interested in a future democracy in Nepal and try to nudge him, push him in ways that might translate that generalized vision of Panchayat democracy into something that was somewhat more recognizably democratic and not just simply with a Panchayat label. I would guess from her standpoint she would have thought that on the first count she was able to have some influence there. The relationship was not a troubled relationship most of the time.

I suppose the third dimension was to get some attention periodically in Washington to Nepal, because attention more generally was being paid, depending on what year you were talking about to India, Pakistan, or both.

In terms of the democracy side of it, probably she would have had to say that it was marginal, whether it was marginally useful, it's hard to judge at this point. Not an uncommon dilemma of the United States.

Q: From to '67 to '68 you were taking Romanian at FSI, is that correct?

BARNES: Having had a second South Asian assignment, I then opted, when I had a chance to start making choices, then opted to come back to Eastern Europe and I heard that the embassy in Bucharest needed a DCM. I knew the ambassador, Dick Davis who had been the DCM in Moscow when we were there so I got in touch with him and asked him if he was prepared to take me on as DCM for Bucharest. He said, "Yes." So that intervening year between '67 and '68, I was back in Washington going to FSI's Romanian course.

When I left Kathmandu, my family had gone ahead, so I arranged to stop over in Bucharest because I knew the then DCM, John Neubert. It was a semi incognito visit. I was there as a friend of his, stopping over. I was not there as the DCM designate of the embassy but I had a chance to look at the situation.

Q: Let's talk a bit about you know, were you looking at the situation there but also you're back before you went to Romania. How did we see Romania at that time and the Ceausescu regime which was rather at its peak?

BARNES: Ceausescu took control in '65 and began fairly early on to try to differentiate himself - as the embodiment of Romania - from the rest of the Warsaw Pact, almost like there being a separate Romanian road to socialism. He didn't use that expression as such. Part of this came in domestic activities in the sense that he just decided Romania would not go along with the Soviet views of what Romania's role was in CEMA, Council on Economic and Mutual Assistance, the rough equivalent of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty organization) for economic purposes. For example, the Soviets felt that Romania ought to be essentially an agricultural country producing for the benefit of the whole community but of course particularly for the Soviet Union. Ceausescu thought that agriculture had been indeed one of Romania's strengths and didn't want to do away with that, but he thought that Romania couldn't progress economically unless it had an industrial base much greater than it had at that time. So there was a split almost in dogma there, somewhat visible, not overly so but enough so that the U.S. could pick that up and others did as well.

Secondly, we thought it was in Romania's interest to diversify its relations with other countries and in part with the assistance of the then prime minister, his name was Maurer, an economist himself, began to work on arrangements with other countries which involving exchanges of ideas with the new Rumanian regime was open to some modifications of traditional hostile relations with NATO members. So such things as allowing Romanians of German descent to leave the country, it was important to the Germans at that time, allowing Jews to leave Rumania was important to Israel, without of course doing anything for Israel even though there was a price and the Israelis paid it. It was against the line on pro-Arab entirely and anti-Israeli. Probably that as anything was an attempt to improve some of the relations with China at the same time, the Sino-Soviet split that we were talking about earlier.

The fact that you had in part of the Soviet Empire a country that was apparently willing to be somewhat different, was obviously interesting to the U.S. and so things like changing the status of our mission from a legation to an embassy happened during this first couple of years of Ceausescu regime with one side of it, some exchange programs began to be developing. That was something else.

The sense I got in Washington was that we ought to keep looking for opportunities to suggest collaborative activities with the Romanians. It would be in our benefit but also would tend to reinforce this approach of theirs.

One small example turned out to have some significance later on. I have forgotten what the year was, '66 perhaps? A then private citizen by the name of Richard Nixon visited Romania and they had encouraged him to do so. He was very well received by Ceausescu at that time.

So that was sort of the atmosphere which I encountered.

Parenthetically, to go back to what I said before; this was a period when I did the commuting between Washington and New York; go up for a day for classes and research and at that time there were such things as overnight trains and get on late at night, sleep on the train, get off at 6 A.M. or something like that in New York and then go . . .

Q: Well, then you went to Bucharest, you were there from 1968 to May of 1971. Now, who was the Ambassador?

BARNES: The ambassador was Dick Davis for the first part of that tour [Editor's Note: Ambassador Davis served in Romania from December 1965 to August 6, 1969] and then Leonard Meeker who had been Legal Advisor to the Department for the second part [Editor's Note: Ambassador Meeker presented his credential on September 16, 1969 and left Bucharest in May 1973].

Q: How did you find Ambassador Davis?

BARNES: Well, first of all, we had served together in Moscow and that was in the Khrushchev period which was a period of some change. As an American diplomat you never felt terribly welcome in the Soviet Union in that period. It made for a fairly close knit community, so we were good friends with the Davises and so I knew I had that backing to start with as his DCM. Also because he had a broad Eastern European background and particularly the Soviet background. Dick could take a lot for granted when we was able to communicate on the substantive as well as the personal level.

Q: On the ground when you got there, how did you see Ceausescu regime?

BARNES: Without putting too fine a point on it, however I would have seen when I arrived at the end of August, there would be a change two days later because two days later is when the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia.

Q: Oh, yes, this was in August of '68.

BARNES: Yes, on the 20th of August '68 and Ceausescu quite quickly denounced the invasion as a violation of the norms of Socialist friendship or whatever phrase he used. But it was clear both because one knew that the Soviet troops had been joined by these token forces from Poland, Hungary, and other Eastern Europeans, yet Romania was clearly the odd country out. That next morning I went down to the...have you ever been to Bucharest?

You may recall though the royal palace is a large square and in front of that and Ceausescu spoke from the balcony of that on the square and condemned the invasion publicly, that Romania would not participate in that sort of activity. Not only was the square packed, which could have been explained in a Communist country by the fact that everybody was told to be there, but the final note that Ceausescu struck was taken up by the crowd. I can't tell you again how much of that was artificial and how much was not, but my sense was from talking to people in the next couple of days or so that it was partly spontaneous. It was very, very popular. This goes back to a whole bunch of questions of the Romanian-Russian relations, not to mention Romanian-Soviet relations.

So the next couple of weeks we at the embassy would be caught up in trying to understand, guess where Romania was going with this approach because it seemed clear to us that they couldn't get away with too much for too long and it is true there were a lot of rumors in that first week or ten days that Soviet troops were massing on the Romanian border and there was going to be an invasion and they were recruiting stands that were set up to accept the volunteers for all sorts of military service. They organized what they called the Patriotic Guard which is sort of like a civilian militia. A couple of days later was a Romanian national holiday, August 23 and units of the Patriotic Guard which had been created in the last couple of days marched there as well.

As it turned out, about ten days or two weeks later, Ceausescu, if not shut up, at least was more restrained in his comments, putting more stress on the Romanian unique position, Romania's unique role in trying to meet the needs of his people, not in terms of a broader lesson for the socialist community and so on, but more toned down defiance as an assertion of their own special nature and so on, and de-emphasis on the communist community and so the sense of real danger that there could be an invasion or something like that, dissipated.

Q: Were we at the embassy getting reports through our intelligence saying any about Soviet possibilities and so forth?

BARNES: We had some. We had some but I mentioned before the reports about maneuvers and so on. There was some concern from Washington, but basically after about two weeks or so, it calmed down. There didn't seem to be great movement in that direction.

What Ceausescu did do in order to take advantage of his popularity was to loosen up some of the controls. The cultural media were able to be much more outspoken about, what should I say, Romanian virtue. This fit in with Ceausescu's own emphasis on Romania particular but also the cultural press was able to talk some about general human values and so on so. It represented a modification there. There was some relaxation in terms of people being able to travel outside the country. There had been some loosening of those restrictions in the previous two, three years or so after '65 but there was more of it now. There was a greater willingness to look for ways of cooperating, if only symbolically, with Western European countries, nonaligned were understood to go along and then some attention to the Chinese relationship.

Q: What about the Yugoslav relationship because Tito was still around and there had seemed to be a relationship between what Ceausescu did and what Tito did.

BARNES: That was certainly perceived by both the Romanians and the Yugoslavs, as far as I could tell be getting to know people at the Yugoslav Embassy at the time. I can't remember specifically Tito-Ceausescu visits but I am sure there must have been some. That was an obvious place too.

Q: To put this in perspective, you were there until '71, before the Ceausescu regime really turned, I won't say crazy, but way off in abhorrent behavior in a way, wasn't it?

BARNES: Yes, I guess in general. There were stages in this. For example, in the summer, August again, of '69, Nixon came to Romania. He had been watching a splash down of one of our space vehicles in the Pacific and he spent about 24 hours in Bucharest so this would have been almost exactly a year after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the fact that there was a Romanian invitation and an American acceptance gave very dramatic thumbing of noses, so to speak, on the Romanian part as far as the Soviet Union was concerned.

Nixon got a tumultuous reception. Again, to some extent possibly organized but I would have to say that there was such a break with the communist period, even if only symbolic and it was such a message to the Romanians probably exaggerated in their understanding as to its implications. Let's say a message, because in the latter months of the Second World War, the Romanians somehow hoped that the Americans would come save them from the Soviets. That didn't happen. One of the standard lines one heard in Romania from Romanians was recalling how even in '48 or even in the '50s people would say, "Have you heard, the Americans are coming?" Somehow the Americans were going to liberate them.

Nixon's visit also gave impetus to a considerable increase in exchange activity and general attempts on both sides to try to find ways of at least symbolizing the change, the dramatic change in the relationship.

From a personal standpoint, I had a rather unique experience in conjunction with the Nixon visit. About two days, maybe three before when Nixon was due to arrive, Dick Davis sought me out and said, "I have just had a message from the party that they want an American to be Nixon's interpreter and you are it." The earlier variation had been to have an American citizen of Romanian descent as the other speaker but somewhere in the party it had been decided that they wanted an American. So I had to appear next to Nixon on the platform at the airport with Ceausescu and translate his remarks which I didn't have ahead of time.

Q: I'm told Nixon was, by people who have been caught up in this, he would not stick to a text.

BARNES: Well, since I didn't have a text, it didn't make much difference in that case. Then I had to do it again at the official dinner and he had one phrase, something like, this was definitely extemporaneous on his part, "It's been an exhausting day, exhausting hospitality." I have forgotten, there was a third way he used "exhausting." I was stumped and it was obvious to everyone there that I was stumped. But I just laughed and passed it off. I did in the period, in part because I was charge in between Dick and Leon Meeker, but also because we had other visitors, I ended up being an interpreter a good part of the time, saw a lot of Ceausescu in that context.

Q: What was your impression of Ceausescu?

BARNES: It is hard here to separate, except for some specific events, it is hard to separate what I remember from '68 to '71 when I was DCM and when what I remember from '74 to '77. For example, Ceausescu came to the U.S. a couple of times and I came along as the interpreter, among other things. There was one visit in '70 and one or two in the other period so my impressions of him come in part from those travel experiences and part from sitting in often as the interpreter, although sometimes just accompanying visitors when one would go around and see him at his office. He would sometimes receive you at the party central committee because he remained the secretary general of the party; sometimes it would be in the presidential palace, the former royal palace in his role as of head of the council of state which was head of state.

A couple of general impressions: He seemed to have very little doubt about his own capabilities, his own wisdom, very little doubt therefore that he knew what was best for Romania. He might know best for other places too but certainly knew what was best for Romania. He was someone who liked to talk and had little reluctance to say what he thought his interlocutor ought to hear; not so much from arrogance, it wasn't quite that. It was perhaps the same sureness in himself and in what he had to say was relevant to his visitor as well as to him. Not an inquisitive mind and, in fact partly the same self-assurance - he probably knew what he needed to know. He wouldn't necessarily probe his interlocutors and yet at the same time he could get into a conversation where he would argue with his interlocutor and make his case in different ways. Yet a good part of the time he seemed to be determined to try to find some common ground because I think he felt that as long as you could maintain a sense of some common interest it would redound to his general benefit.

Q: In your impression he was not a person who was so fixed in his ideas. I assume he probably had yes-men around. Did he sort of relish getting outside that circle, do you think?

BARNES: That's what I was trying to get at just now, up to a point. I didn't feel that intellectual curiosity, a visitor was not someone from whom he might be able to learn, even in part. But it was somebody whom he had to convince of the relevance of his ideas and he was smart enough. Some people, Romanians, used to call him clever, rather than smart, rather than intelligent. He was smart enough to know that he couldn't appear to ignore his interlocutors' ideas or in some cases to go along with the visitor, but it was his agenda a good part, most of the time, I would say.

Q: What was the nature of governance the first time you were there? You know, later he became betrayed as kind of a monster in some of the things he started doing.

BARNES: No. Certainly with respect to the situation of the Romanian people, it was significantly better than it had been in the '50s, maybe the early '60s, although there were a few signs of change toward the end of the fifties. This period that came with the invasion of Czechoslovakia did provide, as I mentioned, for some loosening up inside Romania and then over next years the atmosphere remained paradoxically becoming more restrictive in some respects, but also remaining somewhat open in others. In other words, the ability to travel was still fairly extensive, the ability to exchange ideas with people coming to Romania, being able to talk to groups of Romanians, intellectuals in this case were not cut off from visitors. Now how freely they could express their own ideas and under what circumstances was still another question.

In May of '71, which was the year we left after the first tour, he took a trip to China and to North Korea. He came back obviously from his statements obviously impressed with the discipline shown by those societies, which were headed by Mao and Kim Il Soong in North Korea. In the period between May of '71 and when we came back in March of '74 there began to be some tightening up but with more I would say in the area of how the government was organized and the tasks that were given to the government; the emphasis on discipline, the emphasis on self reliance which was Kim Il Soong's favorite slogan, which fitted in some ways with Ceausescu's that Romania having its own ways. So although the situation didn't get that much better on the whole, during my second tour, it didn't get that much worse. The sorts of things you referred to began to happen more in the '80s.

Q: What about Madame Ceausescu during this time?

BARNES: She became increasingly a part of the scene and if I were to over generalize, her role during our first years there, '68 to '71, was more background. She traveled with him when he came to the States, for example, and was in the public in that sense. She began to assume the more important role in terms of the party hierarchy. That became more pronounced in the second period of '74 to '77 that we were there.

Q: Were you there, you made a trip to the United States when you were DCM?

BARNES: He made one when I was DCM, I am not sure I am right on this; he made two during the second period. I think the second one was just after I got back to Washington.
[Editor's Note: A Google search suggests that Ceausescu traveled to the U.S. in December 1970, 1973, and April 1978. President Nixon visited Romania in August 1969 and President Ford visited in August 1975]

Q: Let's stick to this first period. I have heard that they weren't exactly the greatest houseguests so maybe that was again something of a later period than that.

BARNES: I think he came again to the States. He came again during the early months of the Carter administration and I have forgotten if he came in Reagan's period or not. I don't remember houseguest stories. She as a distinction I would make, in meetings that I attended with American visitors in the second period, she was apt to be there not always, but was there somewhat more often. She became even much more of a public figure and got some of the same official adulation that he did. It was known her world role in personnel decisions was becoming increasingly large. In fact, she may have even been given something formally on that score but that part I am not sure about.

Q: During this first period, let's say dealing with the foreign ministry did you find, was this, were these officials you could deal with or were they always looking over their shoulders?

BARNES: The answer I have to give you is yes to both points. On the whole, Romanian officials with whom we dealt in the Foreign Ministry, but this would applied to some of the other ministries as well, particularly the economic ones, there was an ease in conducting themselves. For the most part, as if they were comfortable. So if there was a looking over the shoulder it was not that visible. Occasionally, you would find somebody who would say that they would have to check that with their colleagues or something of that sort of thing. By then the Americans were pretty knowledgeable as well.

I was involved in the second period in more negotiations than I was in the first, simply a factor I think of the increase in overall perception common interest. When I came back, it was still a Nixon White House. A couple of months after I got back to Bucharest, Nixon had been replaced by Ford. Ford came once and Kissinger came at least once on his own in addition to accompanying the President.

But there was a difference in the second time; it was in part because we were working on some more concrete understanding, not some of the symbolic things. The most important one of those was the most favored nation treaty. Congress had passed the so-called Jackson-Vanik Bill which tied giving Most Favored Nation (MFN) treaty to non market countries to their immigration policies; in the case of the Soviet Union with regard to the ability of Jews to emigrate from the Soviet Union. Romania had a fairly large but not very large, maybe 100,000 people in the Jewish community when we got into the MFN negotiations. Those negotiations and others for the most part were not easy but I generally had the feeling that the people with whom I was dealing had adequate authority to reach understandings, but I don't have any recollection of backing out of agreements that we had reached. Occasionally I would try to see Ceausescu, this was the second time when I was ambassador, if there was something I thought that needed to be taken up with him. But on the whole, like MFN, I dealt with the deputy foreign trade minister and the foreign minister. I had access to just about anybody I wanted to see in the society, good access to party officials, as well as to the Romanian government, particularly to Ceausescu's foreign policy advisor, actually somebody I had dealt with in the non communist world and the communist world as well.

Q: How did the Jackson-Vanik negotiations work? We were moving back and forth between your first and second tours...?

BARNES: They were done in Bucharest between me and the deputy foreign trade minister with instructions obviously from Washington and I had the participation of two people coming from Washington as well. They went on for some time but obviously were successful. I don't recall any major obstacles, there were occasional delays.

Q: During both times you were there was Romania sort of a site for Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union?

BARNES: No. It was a question of emigration of Jews from Romania itself because the Romanian Russian border was about as tense as many borders with non communist countries. No favoritism there. The Soviets, you may remember turned down Jackson-Vanik. They wouldn't go along with Jackson-Vanik.

Q: Well, it's interesting on the Jewish question. We sent President Grant sent a consular officer to Romania in 1875 or so to look after the Jewish population there during some pogroms. It was an interesting.

BARNES: That's something I never learned.

Q: What role did the Soviet Embassy play there? Were they excluded?

BARNES: Watchful. They certainly were effective, well, I am not sure what effective might be because they obviously had their own contacts and so on. There were periodic occasions for celebrating or recognizing or remembering the strong ties between the great Soviet Union, the role of the glorious Red Army in liberating Bucharest but even there, August 23 is the national holiday. That was the day when there was an uprising in Bucharest as the Soviet Army was advancing. I am pretty sure but I can't be precise, I am pretty sure until the early mid '60s when things began to change a bit, when Ceausescu came in the 23rd of August would have been celebrated as the day of liberation by the glorious Soviet Army and maybe the uprising of the Romanian people as well. By '68 when we got there and in wake of the Soviet invasion was of Czechoslovakia; it was clearly a Romanian holiday. The Soviet Army was sort of lost in the telling, put off to the side. I didn't see that much of my Soviet colleagues either time. When I did I didn't find them all that forthcoming and there obviously a Cold War element to that.

Q: Was Bessarabia and now Moldova, was this an issue? This is this hunk of land that the Soviets took over, I guess in 1940, or something?

BARNES: Depending on how far back you want to go, but most recently was 1940. I mentioned I commuted to New York to do my master's at Columbia. My master's thesis was on Bessarabia, so I had a certain interest in that.

My thesis was on unification as Romanians call it. Bessarabia was Romania in 1918. So I had a certain interest. I was able to find a few historians who could talk about the period which I was interested in, of course, implicitly about the situation there at that point but no it wasn't an issue.

Q: It wasn't a matter of our lost province...

BARNES: For two reasons I think: one was it was too dangerous to talk about. Even though the regime was very patriotic, it wasn't raising the Bessarabian question. Actually, it was a combination of Bessarabia and Ikovia. Secondly, I think most Romanians many would have felt that is impossible in any foreseeable future that we can visualize.

Q: What about relations with Bulgaria?

BARNES: Well, there was a territorial issue there, Dobruja, and going back to the Balkan Wars and before that the Ottoman Empire. Romania's relations with the other communist countries were for the most part fairly tepid and because Bulgaria at that point, at least from Romanian perspective, seemed to be particularly slavish in terms of their adulation of the Soviet Union, the Romanian-Bulgarian relationship was not all that great. Although appearances were kept up. But it wasn't from a territorial standpoint, it wasn't as difficult as the relationship with Hungary, where the Hungarians had claims still on Transylvania. Nor even as much, however little that was, with Bessarabia.

Ceausescu would exchanged visits occasionally with the heads of the Communist Party of the other countries. If anywhere there was a little bit of openness, I would say probably with Poland. This was before Solidarity.

Q: Hungary was, they have minority problems also, don't they?

BARNES: The Hungarian minority problem that is the minorities in Hungary are very small in number. So it was not a Hungarian problem from the Romanian side because the Romanians were not that concerned about the small numbers of Romanians in Hungary. All Hungarian governments, including present day, remain concerned about the status problems of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. Number wise, in terms of the total population, last figures I think I saw, probably seven percent of the total Romanian population is of Hungarian ethnic origin and almost all of those, except for Bucharest, almost all of those are in Transylvania.

What is worth noting is there was in 1956 a series of demonstrations which were suppressed, of course, in sympathy with the Hungarian Revolution. These were not just Hungarian, they were Romanians as well.

What the Romanian Communists did and I think much of this goes back to pre Ceausescu times, I don't know the exact dates, was to sort of redraw the map of Transylvania and set up the equivalent of county organizations which tended to reduce the impact of Hungarian...I think there were only two counties which had a majority, a slight majority maybe 51, 52 percent Hungarian. The issue was when and where the Hungarian language should be used has been continued up until the present time. There has been some headway from the Hungarian standpoint with the current Romanian government but it's dwindled.

Q: How did Embassy officers operate in the area? Getting around and you know, compared to the Soviet Union where the KGB is doing all sorts of things, but how about Romania?

BARNES: Like always from European countries, the host government at no extra charge provided a police post outside the embassy, including the ambassador's residence as well. It meant that Romanian citizens wanting to come to the embassy would have to run something of a gauntlet and could be turned back by this reception committee. That was reduced substantially already in the first period I was there and less in the second. They were still there but there were more like surveillance contingency, just one policeman in a booth right by the gate and then at least couple around the perimeter.

My first negotiations in late '68 or early '69 was a reciprocal lifting of travel notification restrictions and closed areas. So we and the Romanians both agreed there would no longer be a requirement, in this case - 24 hours in Romania, for traveling outside of Bucharest. The only restriction would be areas that were specifically posted with sign boards with the symbol do not enter-type thing. So that meant in effect, we could travel freely. Since our cars were foreign cars, since our cars had diplomatic license plates on them and since we didn't try to play games, it wasn't difficult to tell where we were going or who we are. When you checked into a hotel you produced your diplomatic card, passport. But it didn't mean there wasn't surveillance, they were just a little less obvious.

Q: It sounds a bit like my time in Yugoslavia, '62 to '67 when I was the head of the consular section. I was required to travel and investigate whether American citizens needed attention. I didn't want to upset anybody and made a point of dropping by the police and asking how to get to such and such a place. Just to let them know and explain what I was about.

BARNES: Just to follow that theme for a moment. As I said there were other ways of keeping track of us. One day, during my first period there, probably early '69, one day one of my colleagues appeared at the door in my office making gestures to get my attention, obviously not talking and I looked rather puzzled and he made this gesture and I handed him a piece of paper and he wrote, "You are on the air." Somehow my voice had been picked up elsewhere in the embassy and broadcast. We couldn't figure out; was there a microphone somewhere in my office? Was that how they were doing it? It didn't seem for various reasons to be it. Then my colleague said, "Go to another office and let me check and see whether it's you or whether it is something in place (in the office)," through a certain amount of triangulation and so on. We came to the conclusion it was me that was broadcasting!. I was asked, "Is there anything different about you today?" I said, "Yes, come to think of it, I am wearing a pair of shoes that I just had repaired and had new heels put on." Experimentation determined that there was a microphone in the heel of the shoes. I had sent them out with our maid. She'd come back and I'd put them on one day and then when I started to walk around the house, they didn't feel comfortable. One heel felt a little bit higher so I sent them back and when they came back they were OK but that of course, gave a clue to as to where to look.

People have told me they have gone through a security course at the Department and that my shoes are on display. Dick Davis wrote back to SY (Office of Security), "Don't you think, we at least sent the shoe in, don't you think you ought to reimburse Harry for the price of new shoes?" The Department response was, "We will replace the one shoe." He finally persuaded them to pay for a pair of shoes. (laughter)

Q: Was there any harassment in driving around or anything like that?

BARNES: No, not of the type I remember from Prague or from Moscow. We tried to make sure every one of our people weren't being foolish in terms of attracting attention or doing things

Q: How about military attaches? They have a distinct set of way of doing things which can cause problems.

BARNES: Again, maybe we were lucky, hard to be absolutely sure. Maybe its they had such good discipline. Their people were so well trained but no, no incidents as I recall.

Q: How did the Vietnam War play while you were there this first time?

BARNES: .The war, in a way, was more of an issue in the first time, 68 to 71, to the extent it was an issue. Whereas by 1975, we were getting out of Vietnam. Essentially it was one of those things where we disagreed. Romania, as a staunch supporter, at least in words, of the epic struggle of the brave Vietnamese people and would say critical things about American efforts to dominate. We essentially would assert in various ways what we were doing was in the interests of the Vietnamese people and trying to avoid any outside regime being imposed on upon them against their will and so on.

Q: You didn't have demonstrations?

BARNES: There weren't demonstrations. Part of the Romanian talent, if that's the word, was that you agreed on the major things, and you recognized the differences on what program seemed to be minor questions in that particular relationship, not that Vietnam was minor for the United States as a whole, but it was much more important to us at that point than Romania be a continuing thorn in the Soviet side, than the Romanian support to the U.S. military efforts in Vietnam.

Q: How about students? Were there student exchanges?

BARNES: There were student exchanges, exchanges of professors as well.

Q: How did they work?

BARNES: In general, quite well. The American student and professor exchanges I knew better because I was in Romania at the time. The ones in the U.S. I knew somewhat more second hand. The cooperation again on the whole, occasionally there were complications but on the whole the cooperation given by the universities, both to the exchange students and the professors was good and made it a practice usually twice a year to go visit the students and professors in their places of work and encourage them to come by and see me. Not surprisingly, there were some professorial colleagues who were more helpful and some who were somewhat less helpful, but on the whole the Americans students and professors were well received.

Q: Was there much American tourism there?

BARNES: Pretty limited, certainly more than in the '60s. With the notoriety that Romania got, or publicity whatever you want to call it, after '68 and the defiance of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, it seemed like a more interesting destination. Tourist facilities were pretty limited. One had the feeling that the state travel agency had among its missions, perhaps its most important mission, was keeping track of tourists so that tourists can do things that tourists shouldn't do.

Q: How about Romanian-Americans? Were they much of a factor?

BARNES: Some, in part because there are so many Americans who were academics and had written and were still writing on Romania and for them, after '68, the chance to work in the country in the context of a formal exchange arrangements for some of them, because of the acquaintances they had built up over the years, was a welcome thing. So again, with due respect the Americans had to show, but being of Romanian descent, they would be aware of the need to do this, due respect to being careful what you said to who, where.

Q: You didn't have the problem that we had in Yugoslavia of Croatian Americans coming back, you know wanting to be Croatian.

BARNES: No, the closest you could get to that might be Transylvanian Hungarian might end up being of importance of Hungary.

Q: How did the Nixon visit go when he was president when you were there? Presidential visits...I've heard people liken them to, an earthquake.

BARNES: Well, the earthquake aspects came primarily in terms of arrangements for the visit, the logistics because we had teams from the White House, the Secret Service, the State Department, all descending on the Embassy. We had a group of Romanian counterparts that on the whole were pretty good. They knew it was imperative that it be successful. They also knew that there were limits that they had to observe, for in dealing with Americans because Americans were defined as dangerous at certain points so this is something of a shift. It wasn't a complete surprise obviously, by that time, at that point.

As I mentioned earlier, he was greeted with great enthusiasm. The streets were literally packed and I had seen enough of what we used to call, "rent a crowds" to be pretty sure that this was genuine; or at least a lot of it was genuine. Nixon by that time had been himself was enough of a politician to be able to sense what crowds are like. I rode back into town with him as the interpreter together with his official escort, the head of protocol and so on, and it was clear both from the way he looked and what he would say from time to time about how impressed he was with the reception he was getting.

Q: Did you get a feel for the chemistry between Ceausescu and Nixon?

BARNES: No, I would say there was a certain amount, going back to my description of Ceausescu. I don't know if I used the word "canny"; I'll use the word "clever", somewhere in that area. I think there was some similarity, at least on that aspect between Nixon and Ceausescu and probably recognized it in each other.

Also I think Nixon came with a certain amount of admiration for Ceausescu and in terms of Ceausescu being willing to stand up as much as he did to the Soviets and try to be somewhat independent.

Ceausescu is a little harder to judge because I didn't really have the experience of seeing Ceausescu in the presence of another chief of state. I saw a lot of Ceausescu but not with that particular aspect. If I had to guess, I would guess that he would probably have some respect, admiration - I'm not sure which is the proper word - for Nixon as a politician. I can't say how deeply Ceausescu's knowledge of the American system went, but he probably had enough to know that Nixon had some political skills.

Q: You left there in 1971?

BARNES: May of 1971. It was timed with Ceausescu's visit to Asia.

Q: Where did you go?

BARNES: I went back to Washington. I had been assigned as the officer in charge of junior officer personnel in the PER Bureau and did that for just about a year. [Editor's Note: Actually there was no PER Bureau, even though most FSO use that short hand nomenclature. This office was listed in the 1972 telephone book as being under the Deputy Director for Career Counseling and Assignments (PER/CA). Ambassador Barnes was assigned to counsel officers who already had their first tour and held the rank of FSO 6 and below. True new hires, or junior officers, were counseled by another office in PER/CA under John Day.]. It was a new office as occasionally happens, the Department reorganization would take place, an attempt to try to enhance the competence and capabilities of some of the counseling functions, not just the assignment part, but the part of working with the officers. This is a brand new office of junior officer personnel. We worked both on assignments but particularly on the counseling of officers and at that point speaking of Vietnam, there was a substantial number, over a hundred if I remember correctly, new Foreign Service Officers whose first assignment was Vietnam as development officers in CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support), almost like an AID (Agency for International Development) development officer, but certainly not a traditional Foreign Service assignment. So they needed a lot of counseling and particularly counseling when they came back from Vietnam and we made a particular effort to try to find good, shall I say, mainline type assignments for them.

That was a lot of fun, in a way, not that it was easy, trying to find initial good assignments or to find good second assignments in general for junior officers, but particularly for the CORDS officers.

I did a fair amount of traveling and trying to visit posts where there were junior officers abroad. I sometimes would need a central place or country with lots of consulates and so on. Otherwise, it tended to be stop at one post for a couple of days to get some of the flavor of the place and also to get a sense of how the officer was doing and of course, it was important to find a way of following up on that.

Q: Did you get a sense of the junior officer attitude because these were people come mostly out of the late 60's during the time of student revolution and its slogans of don't trust anybody over 30. Did you pick up some of that?

BARNES: Yes, there was some of that and yet, obviously the fact that they had come into the Foreign Service and made their peace up to a point, obviously the institution, at least what they thought the institution might be and to some extent I think some of them thought that maybe they had a mission, without putting too much of exaggerated face on it, to try to work from inside. There was something they could do if they maybe brought some experiences that were valid. On the whole, they demonstrated a combination of seriousness and some enthusiasm as well. I was impressed...I'd known junior officers, having been one myself, I knew that junior officers in my class and elsewhere, but to deal with that much all the time, what do we have, a couple of hundred, junior officers was quite an experience.

Q: I would think too the officers coming out of CORDS, having seen a war, many of them having quite a lot of responsibility, that this would be a particularly mature, seasoned group of people in a way.

BARNES: Definitely a mature group and definitely molded by that experience. How much credit goes to the people who did the original placement, I don't know, but some goes there, but the majority has got to go to the individuals themselves and how they handled their experience.

Q: Did you find you had a problem with the system saying on one hand, "Look, these people have done something. They were asked to do something difficult. They should be rewarded" and a bureaucracy that is used to putting junior officers in slots.

BARNES: There were some tensions there. The whole system,...the reform at that time had been to set up an advocacy relationship with those whose job it was to fill slots. It didn't matter who filled them but that you wanted to be able to give, as assignments officer, you wanted to get the best possible people for the jobs you had coming open. Then there were the counselor's whose job was to try to understand and take into account the needs and preferences of the officer himself.

Our office was different in the sense that it combined both the assignments and the counseling function whereas the other grades had them separate but in a sense all that did was to internalize the conflict between needs and preferences within one office and fight some of these things off ourselves. But again if I could generalize I think I got enough in the way of understanding the other parts of the personnel system that there was a real obligation to try to find good jobs for people who were coming out of CORDS and to recognize the experience they had was unique for the Foreign Service. I happened to be fortunate enough to have a good group of people working with me in the junior officer office so we were able to thrash out among ourselves how we determined the priorities, whether we leaned more toward these officers' preferences or more toward the job needs, on the whole that we thought was a good job.

Q: Something I think was not as evident, or not as emphasized at the time and I could comment on it was our recruitment of minority officers. My experience was that they were selected but tossed into the system and expected to move ahead and often they didn't, because they needed some mentoring.

BARNES: That's really a subject for another conversation. The main reason is that one of my subsequent assignments was as Director General of the Foreign Service and that's where that problem came up.

Q: OK, we cover that later. Did you become involved in the junior officer recruiting?

BARNES: Oh, yes. That was done by the recruitment office, to be sure but since we were the intake, so to speak, the funnel for new officers, we got involved.

Q: How did you find that worked at the time?

BARNES: I was able to judge primarily by the people who came into the service, that is the fresh junior officers and compared at least to the group with which I came into the Foreign Service which was twenty years earlier, I thought we were getting in say, 1971 to 1972 was on the whole substantially better than my classmates and I were in 1951. In part because they tended to have more in the way of experience, and in part because, maybe the two perhaps are connected, they had given somewhat more thought as to what they were told were likely getting into in the way of a career and, maybe CORDS aside, the fact that the upheaval in American society, produced by Vietnam, had stimulated some general thinking by young Americans at that time which reflected these trends. Granted, '51, '52 had people who had been in the Second World War, not all but some, but that didn't have this one aspect of, you know, sort of what's the meaning of the United States at the Vietnam period. It forced them into thinking.

Q: Where did you go after being the personnel counselor for junior officers?

BARNES: I went to the Office of the Executive Secretariat (S/S). The Secretary of State was William Rogers. Ted Elliott was the Executive Secretary of the Department at that point.

Q: You were in the secretariat from when to when?

BARNES: From roughly summer, maybe July of '72 until February of '74.

Q: What were your responsibilities?

BARNES: I was one of two Deputy Executive Secretaries in S/S. Are you familiar with how the secretariat operates?

Q: Well, explain, it is not for me, it's for the audience.

BARNES: The Executive Secretariat's job was to provide support both for the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary and the under secretaries, in effect for the so-called Seventh Floor operation of the State Department. It had two subordinate units, one of them called the Secretariat Staff (S/S-S), these were essentially the people who reviewed memoranda coming from the different parts of the Department addressed to one of the principles for content, form, whatever to make sure the problem was posed clearly, a course of action was set sent out, recommendations were made and the necessary coordination or clearances had been done. So that was in a sense a slower paced operation than the second part which I will describe which was the Operation Center (S/S-O). Its founding, I think, goes back to the Cuban Missile Crisis, I am not sure. It goes back to the '60s.

The Operations Center (S/S-O) is essentially the set of people who twenty-four hours a day try to keep track of what is going on anywhere in the world that might have some implications for the United States. They produce information for the Secretary and the other principles in various forms with always the emphasis on timeliness and on judgment on knowing what to alert principles to, and when to do it. So if you got an emergency suddenly appearing, that's when the Operation Center gets very involved and sometimes if the emergency continues for more than a short period the Operations Center staff is supplemented by people from the different bureaus, so you could have a task force actually meeting in the Operation Center area, supported by the Operation Center doing the work that needs to be done in that particular crisis.

The Executive Secretary, in charge of the whole operation on behalf of the secretariat, he has two deputies; one responsible for overseeing the work of the operation center (S/S-O) and the other responsible for overseeing the work of the Secretariat Staff (S/S-S). I had the oversight of the Operation Center.

Q: My understanding is that the relatively junior to early mid-career officers that come up to the Operation Center are selected people who are usually going on to bigger and better things. But the shift hours are grueling. When you got there, how did you find that the cadre with whom you were working?

BARNES: Very, very talented. The name Bob Blackwell mean anything to you? He was one of them at that point.

And of course, having come from junior officer personnel and being unusually concerned about assignments for junior officers, I had a certain advantage that I could bring to the work of the secretariat, in terms of working on assignments, both onward assignments for those who were finishing their tours as well as new officers for the secretariat.

So I had, aside from that sort of tangential responsibility, essentially oversight concern for what was going on in the Operation Center which meant that I was there, which was down the hall at that time, from the Secretary's office and the Executive Secretary's office. I would go down there periodically, but also was on the phone a lot being query by the duty officer from the operation center, a question of what to do under certain circumstances. This could take the form of my being called at night at home. I would have a beeper. At one point for some reason the beeper wasn't working and my wife and I awoke suddenly to realize there were a lot of flashing lights out on our lawn and it turned out to be two Montgomery police cars, Montgomery County police cars, with a message from the State Department who hadn't been able to reach me. It turned out to be well, significant but not that significant.

Occasionally, there were items which turned out in retrospect to be interesting but I didn't know it at the time, one of the things I got briefed on in '73 was what turned out to be sort of a precursor to the overthrow of Allende in Chile, but I didn't know I was going to end up in Chile some years later when I got that piece of information. Somebody dug it out and sent it to me and said, "Remember this?"

Q: During this '72 to '74 period were there any sort of crises or incidents that particularly come to mind? Of course, you have the October War in '73 but that would have turned into a task force almost immediately.

BARNES: That was a task force almost immediately. That was October, 1973. You are right.

Vietnam was still going on and there were ups and downs in Vietnam. I am trying to think what there was in the U.S. Soviet relationship at that point.

Q: So, you were there when Kissinger replaced Secretary Rogers on September 23, 1973. Did you get any impression about Secretary Rogers and his leadership, grasp of foreign policy and so on?

BARNES: Limited, because I arrived in the summer of 1972. More of a hands-off than a hands-on person, pleasant. I don't have a clear sense of what his priorities were so although the work by its nature, the Operation Center was demanding, I couldn't feel any strong Rogers' impact.

Q: When Kissinger came in, was this a real change? I mean from your perspective.

BARNES: Yes, twofold because Ted Elliott left, was appointed ambassador to Afghanistan [Editor's Note: Ambassador Theodore Lyman Eliot presented his credentials in Kabul on November 21, 1973 and departed post June 1978] and Tom Pickering took his place. Ted and I had known each other since we were in Moscow together. Tom I had met but had not really known and it was clear from the beginning, not surprisingly that Tom had clear instructions from Kissinger, what Kissinger wanted, what Kissinger considered an adequate operation and that meant a substantially stepped up pace, because of both the variety and intensity of Kissinger's interests. That reflected to those of us working with Tom primarily through Tom because Tom was the point of contact with the Secretary, others would have some bidding from time to time; that plus through the one or two staff assistants to Kissinger whose responsibilities among other things was liaison with the Executive Secretariat. You may recognize the name of Jerry Bremer, that was his role. My desk was then, there's a door between Jerry's office and my desk and we worked back and forth on secretariat matters.

Q: While Kissinger steeped up the pace, did he shake up the secretariat operations at all?

BARNES: No, not that I recall. He left to Tom the running of the secretariat. I don't remember any significant changes at that point in time.

Q: Now did Pickering run the operation?

BARNES: A combination of quite decentralized, in terms of giving responsibility to his staff. Hands-on in the sense he wanted to be kept informed having a very good network of his own so in addition to what we could tell him as we needed to. He was getting information, asking questions from people all over the building.

Ted was somewhat similar but probably somewhat less intense than Tom and the difference I think in good part was the nature of the demands got transmitted from Kissinger.

Q: Did you get involved in any trips or anything like that?

BARNES: No. Supporting the Secretary's travels was the job of the Secretariat Staff (S/S-S), the other side. Travel tended to be more the individual secretariat officers' duties rather than the deputy's.

Q: Because you are seeing the Department from the top down, how did you find the cooperation with the bureaus, particularly the geographic bureaus?

BARNES: We had, I suppose I would say, two responsibilities; one was internal which covers the bureaus; the other was external and relationships with the NSC or other departments. That was depending on the issue, less frequent or more frequent but with the bureaus, that was daily and at times, again depending on the problem, very, very intense. Essentially a good part of our responsibility was to know the people in the bureaus well enough to be able to make requests of them, often on short notice and get results in a short period of time, show enough understanding of what their problems were and possible difficulties and take that into consideration. It was essential to know who was responsible for what on what issues with very little notice. If you had to get something done, you would know where to go and how to get it done. That was somewhat truer of the individual staff secretariat because of a lot of paper involved and sometimes the editing and rewriting. The Operations Center, they had a requirement to make sure that I was kept involved and inform, but at the same time not delay getting the action people involved. It took some skill, not because people didn't want to do it, but just the timing and issues, things going on.

Q: You must have had to do an awful lot of telephoning people at night as desk officers.

BARNES: A certain amount. I used the Operations Center for that . They would call me and maybe I would say, "I need to find so-and-so and if you can't find so-and-so then get somebody else."

Q: What was the relationship with the NSC (National Security Council)? Of course, at that time Kissinger, even when he moved over to the State Department, remained the National Security Advisor and he could task the NSC staff. But in a way you also were dealing with day to day crises which might blossom into something the NSC would have to deal with eventually. How did this work?

BARNES: Well, there were a couple of people at the NSC with whom we dealt. The principle one for much of the time I was there was Brent Scowcroft, and often Ted himself or Tom would be the contact with Brent. I did sometimes, I might call his deputies from time to time. Again it was the sort of relationship where you needed to know what people's concerns, interests were that we have a composite picture so you know when and whether and how to get in touch with them about another problem.

One of Brent's deputies at that point was Alexander Haig. I dealt some with him too.

Q: Then in '74, what happened?

BARNES: In the fall, about the time Kissinger was designated Secretary of State, it was a couple of months before Kissinger moved to State, I went around to see the then Director General whose name was Bill (William O.) Hall and expressed my interest in an ambassadorship to Bucharest because Len Meeker was about to leave and Bill said, "Sorry, it has already been decided who's going to go to Bucharest." So I said, "I'm sorry too".

When Bill Rogers was replaced by Kissinger all ambassadorships were put on hold, all appointments were put on hold and there was only toward the beginning of 1973 that, sorry '74, that Kissinger began to pay some attention to ambassadorial assignments.

One day I went to see his special assistant who was Larry Eagleburger and told him why I thought I would be a good candidate for the embassy in Bucharest and he was kind enough to agree and so within another month or two my nomination went forward for it.

Q: Do you think the fact that you had come to the attention of President Nixon had any bearing?

BARNES: Probably, because I was at least a known quantity to Nixon from the Ceausescu visits. I don't know how much Nixon had to do with the actual decision.

Q: Romania is always known as one of those "iffy" countries, vis a-vis whether a career officer or a political appointee should be named. Was that considered at that time more a career type job?

BARNES: Actually, of my several predecessors by the time I got to Bucharest, Len was the only one who was non-career. On the other hand, he was a State Department career employee as legal advisor, but not a Foreign Service Officer. I'm not sure what side you would put him in. Dick Davis before that was career, Bill Crawford before that was career, so more recently, yes. But at that time Eastern Europe positions tended more toward career appointments.

Q: Did you have any problem getting confirmation?

BARNES: No.

Q: You presented your credentials on March 14, 1974 and left post on November 7, 1977, so you served about three and a half years. How were you received as ambassador?

BARNES: Very well. In terms of the government, just about everybody who was running government in '77 had been around in some capacity in '74 when I left. We had a broad enough acquaintance with other parts of society that was tolerated at that point, I'm thinking in terms of universities, the arts and so on, and a certain number of people who didn't fit in a particular category. It was a little bit like going home. The whole family had command of the language. Our son, for example on our first tour had gone to a Romanian school for two years, the first foreigner to do that, first diplomatic foreigner to do that and one of our daughters had gone to an art school, so it was definitely something we looked forward to.

The main focus, as I mentioned earlier was the most favored nation (MFN). That was a '75 negotiation. The legislation, the Jackson-Vanik Bill, had been passed in November, I think of '74 and there were other negotiations as well; a general economic framework, cultural negotiations. President Ford came from Helsinki in late '75 and we organized a trip by train from Bucharest up to one of the presidential palaces in Carpathians. Kissinger came separately by himself in '76, I think. It would have been a special occasion. He told me at that point that he thought I should get out of the interpreting business. He said, "Hire an interpreter and find somebody. You shouldn't have to worry about that." I had sort of mixed feelings. I enjoyed it up to a point, but it was an awful lot of pressure, in part, because the notes I kept, because of the nature of my handwriting, were hardly legible to myself, so I had to do memorandum of conversation, I had to struggle with my own notes.

Major event, not so much in terms of American-Romanian relations which went along fairly, I would say smoothly within the framework I described earlier of Romania being somewhat of a maverick country, good terms with Israel, for example, good terms with China, and with us. But in terms of impact on the people there was an earthquake of 6.2 magnitude earthquake in Bucharest in March of 1977.

Q: What happened and how did we respond?

We sent some people from the U.S., earthquake specialists and they provided some advice to their Romanian counterparts.

I decided it was important that the embassy staff, including the Romanian staff of the embassy have as much information as I had from our experts about what the possibilities were of aftershocks and that sort of thing. So I organized a meeting in the courtyard of the embassy and shared that information. I had a calling down from the foreign minister; I think it was, a day or so later for spreading panic in the city by providing that information.

Later that year, roughly summer, I had a visit from one of our friends who is an historian who wrote primarily on the Balkans and had the reputation as a serious scholar on Eastern European history in the U.S. A number of American historians coming to Romania were always seeking him out. He came by our house one evening and brought with him part of a manuscript on which he on which he had been working which had to do with the history of the Communist Party of Romania and asked if I would take a look at it and I said I would as a friend, not in my official capacity. I put it aside to read it a couple of days later.

Before I got a chance to read it, I got word from the embassy that the embassy perimeter had been surrounded by a phalanx of Romanian troops which was unusual. So I went down to see for myself and it was quite clear. I could get in and out; the American staff could get in and out. The Romanian staff and visitors, nobody else was allowed in. So I tried to reach my usual contacts at the Foreign Ministry and couldn't get through. I kept being told in effect, not available, not available.

This went on for about two or three days until none of could figure out why so we reported this to Washington which raised this question with the Romanian Ambassador was in Washington who said he didn't know what this was all about. Then on third day I had called from a Romanian diplomat who had been the Romanian Ambassador to the U.N whom I knew, but not well, said he wanted to come around and see me. I said, "Fine. Nobody else seems to want to see me. I want to see you." He said, "Well, you may wonder why these special precautions. He went on to explain, it has to do with the fact that you were given the manuscript by, I don't think he used the word dissident, but that is the sense of the accusation. "These precautionary measures which we have taken will drop immediately. All you've got to do is to give us the manuscript." I said I would report his information to Washington, but my own position - subject to confirmation from Washington - was that the manuscript was given to me by a friend to look at and I would be glad to give it back to the friend but I couldn't give it to somebody else without his permission. Washington fortunately said that's OK. We alerted some of the American historians' community and they began to send telegrams to their contacts in Bucharest with questions about this.

A couple of days later it went away. I was, if not persona grata, I was not quite as grata as I had been earlier, but so resumed status quo ante.

Q: Did you get any feeling that this might have been an operation on the part of the security apparatus? The KGB all the time has been doing things to screw up relations. Was this a Ceausescu type thing?

BARNES: My guess, and I never knew for sure, was that given the nature of the relationship with the United States, that is it was too important a relationship to have it disturbed over anything involving the U.S. Ambassador, without Ceausescu's agreement. I think I mentioned when we were talking about Ceausescu earlier, there is a certain impulsiveness about him and my sense is that he said to himself that that's going too far; we need to do something. But I think it was clear within a week that or so it wasn't achieving his purpose or the purpose of whoever proposed it. There were things that were more important.

My friend was held another month or so, showed up at our door with a nice prison haircut. I gave him back his manuscript.

Q: Was the security apparatus getting, over the time you were there and by the time you were ambassador, was it getting more intense or was it about the same level, did you feel?

BARNES: I mentioned earlier Ceausescu had paid a visit to China and to North Korea and on his return he began to introduce various measures or approaches which involved a tightening up of organizational structures, changes in priorities and a growing sense of pressure but that didn't seem to detract on the whole from a certain tolerance of foreigners within Romania or visitors to Romania. But after the Helsinki Accords with the emphasis on Basket Three - educational, cultural, scientific exchanges with other people - there was a certain inhibitory effect there to try to act like a civilized country. This is all before he decided and that decision came, I think, in the early '80s that somehow Romania could not afford to be dependent on anybody from the outside, not just the Soviet Union but to others including the U.S., if it meant giving up what Ceausescu considered to be the adequate control of this his society and you need to shape it in the direction you thought was required, for example.

He was not bothered by the fact that there were shortages of heating oil and Romanian winters can get quite cold, but Romanian oil to him was more valuable as an export product which would earn foreign currency for whatever grandiose project he might have in mind at the time. If people had to suffer and oil shortage; if hospitals were inadequately supplied, well, it's too bad. Old people die so what difference does a year or two or something of that sort make?

So when I went back briefly in '82, coming or going to India, and then again in '89 it turned out to be right before the Revolution, the atmosphere was terribly grim, particularly grim in December of '89 because December is a grim month anyway, but even the summer month I was there, '82, was grim. So there is a certain contradiction that things were closing in but there was still some room.

Q: Was there a sense of he's got a different set of priorities than a good humanitarian might have or was there a sense of megalomania?

BARNES: Megalomania began while we were there, particularly in the second period. This had to do with whatever the superlatives were marking the glorification of Ceausescu's wisdom and Ceausescu's accomplishments. The status of Romania was painted as if the whole world paying court to its great leader, Ceausescu. This is a period when Mrs. Ceausescu began to be given more attention and so very often it was two of them who were being celebrated, not just Ceausescu himself. You got this more and more, both tragic and almost crazy, stupid, in the glorification in this make believe world that Romania became, at least as described in the regime's publications.

Q: Did you get involved in any of the famous hunts, the boor hunts and all that?

BARNES: No, as I recall, well, I don't recall being invited. I probably wouldn't have gone since I am not a hunter. In fact, they may have known I was not a hunter and therefore no invitation was forthcoming.

Q: One hears stories about how they went out and found tame bears and drugged the boors and all that.

BARNES: You get a sort of sycophant mentality in that environment, whether Ceausescu said I want five drugged boar or whatever, somebody figured it out and provided the necessary.

Q: President Ford came at one point.

BARNES: Ford came in connection with the CSCE meeting at Helsinki after that.

Q: Did you feel, or your colleagues conclude, that maybe these Helsinki Accords really were going to be a good thing? The Accords, particularly the Third Basket, turned out to be pretty important. But at the time some American pundits felt that we were giving things away to the Soviets.

BARNES: In the case of Romania we already had that earlier experience after 1968 when the rapprochement, if you call it that, was beginning. By the time you got to Helsinki there was already a fair amount more being done with the media and the (indistinct), of course was the less visible side. But various types of exchanges,...so we were already prepared to think these were good things and were worth doing.

Q: You were there during the Watergate thing, weren't you?

BARNES: I got there in March and Watergate was already in bloom at that period.

Q: How did Watergate play in Romania?

BARNES: Well, obviously with the controlled media, it was fairly straight reporting, that is White House announcement, Congressional whatever the Congress did and so on. You would get from the unofficial people mixtures of reactions; on the one hand, sort of marveling that the sitting president could be forced out of office. Obviously, that was not the danger that Ceausescu seemed likely to face at that point. Amazement in that sense, and I think they had a certain amount of admiration that American society was capable and willing to take that sort of step or see that sort of process through. Probably a third category would be the people who said, "Our society has been known for its heights of corruption that can reach for a long time going back to the Ottoman Empire and so you have a president who broke some laws. Is that uncommon or not?" They would shrug it off, at least in the sense, "Well, it may be fine for you to be able to do that sort of thing, nothing we can do about it."

Q: Did the collapse of South Vietnam have much play?

BARNES: Again mixed. From an official standpoint, this was something that should have happened a long time ago and the U.S. should have left Vietnam. From the standpoint of those who were basically admirers of the U.S. recognition that this must have been a difficult settlement set of decisions to reach, in fact to admit defeat. The Romania attitude was, it's not relevant, doesn't affect us.

Q: What was Israel's influence or lack there of in Romania when you were there as ambassador?

BARNES: Certainly at one level a privileged position because Ceausescu prided himself on the fact that he had good relations with both the Arab States in the region and with Israel. And thought it was important to appear to treat Israel as an equal or a country valid in its own right. Privileged in another sense that the regime was prepared to permit the exodus, the emigration of Romanians of Jewish faith in exchange for a certain amount of ransom money and I never found out just what was paid. But it was pretty clear that if you were Jewish and could eventually, and eventually might be a year, or it could be shorter than that.

There was a symbolic aspect as well, in that from time to time the chief rabbi would appear on ceremonial occasions like the opening of the national assembly. He might be at the airport when a foreign president arrived or something like that to sort of demonstrate the fact that the Jewish faith could be practiced in Romania.

There were lots of restrictions even so, but some tolerated openness.

Q: What was the role of the Romanian Orthodox Church?

BARNES: Essentially, traditional, traditional in the sense of recognizing the primacy of the state and therefore, ceremonies, yes. You could talk about Easter and again state occasions the patriarch might appear. Theological schools were allowed to continue operating but on a reduced level and the religious holidays were, like Easter were tolerated, in fact sort of recognized. Nobody tried to stop that sort of thing.

In terms of any significant influence, no. The advantage of the Orthodox Church probably was that it was so clearly Romanian and in that sense reinforced the nationalist efforts of Ceausescu. Less desirable were the Protestants, largely Protestant, but some Catholic, Hungarians in Transylvania who tended to see themselves as Hungarians first, second Romanians. But still there was a toleration aspect there in terms of the churches being able to function. Some property had been seized at an earlier stage and turned over to the Orthodox Church.

Q: Is there anything else we should talk about in this time you were in Romania?

BARNES: No, I don't think so. I think I would summarize it,...it was a society that put the two periods together, which had evolved considerably in terms of openings for citizens, especially against the background of practically no evolution earlier. It was a society which, in that period, you could characterize as open, as Polish or Hungarian societies were. But still in the Romanian context, you would have to call it open with limits or limited openness and so from the standpoint of service there, both individually and professionally, there was a lot that could be done and you really felt we had some insights, if not inroads, to Romanian society broadly speaking.

Q: Well, then 1977, whither?

BARNES: I sort of keep going back and doing things I that I had done before. I was selected by Carol Laise, whom we talked about her earlier, who had been my ambassador in Kathmandu, to be her successor as director general of the Foreign Service. I was DG from November of '77 until late January of '81, right after the Reagan inauguration.

Q: When you arrived there, what was the goal of the director general at that time?

BARNES: The controlling factor there was that there was a new undersecretary for management by the name of Ben Reed and the second relevant factor was that Cy Vance was secretary of state, who had a particular interest in the personnel activities of the Department especially from the standpoint of what he felt was inadequate representation of women and minorities so he launched a variety of efforts, emphasis particularly on trying to overcome notice of the shortfalls. One example of it was the setting up of the Family Liaison Office to pay some attention to the concerns of the family.

My charge from him on the minority side was to overhaul our recruitment program and direct it much more than it had been directed at that point toward attracting women and minorities. There had already been a lawsuit against the Department, by a group of women FSOs, raising questions about equity.

Q: This was Allison Palmer and company.

BARNES: That's right. I think even without that, Cy Vance was felt strong enough about the set of issues he would have pushed on this front. So that is one aspect.

The second aspect was Ben's conclusion, based in large part on his own motivation, because he had been at the Department once before, I think when Dean Rusk was secretary. So he did have a good sense of the Department and was someone who would share Cy Vance's concerns about equity, very strongly. Ben felt that the time had come, both out of some of the convictions that I talked about now, but also because of the advent in the Carter administration of a desire to reform the Civil Service. You may recall something called civil service reform in the 1970s. Ben's judgment, which Cy Vance supported, was that we ought to take advantage of that period of time to try to do something comparable for the Foreign Service. But Civil Service reform was pretty well through, when we began to launch ours and that set of activities culminated in what was called the Foreign Service Act of 1980, which I think is probably still a basic act.

So those were two areas of my particular focus. I still remember junior officers, so I tried to pay attention to them and when there was a junior officer class, I would go out to where they were having their offsite journey for a week or so and spend a day or two with the new class.

On the minorities question, we had to provide a report to Cy every six weeks, every two months of how we were doing, why we weren't doing better. We also strengthened the mid-career recruiting effort, bringing people in from the civil service or from other parts of government service, or from staff corps, into the officer corps under a special lateral entry program, again with women and minorities particularly in mind.

The Foreign Service Act, as you would expect took a lot of negotiation with AFSA (American Foreign Service Association). We basically got their support for the effort. It took a lot of time on Capitol Hill with members of the appropriate committees.

Q: What kind of a role did they play? How interested and who were some of the players?

BARNES: One that comes particularly to mind is Jim Leach who is still very active in Congress, a Republican from eastern Iowa who had been in the Foreign Service himself which explains in part some of his interest.

Dante Fascell [Democrat-Florida] who was chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee at that time. Claiborne Pell [Democrat-Rhode Island], who had also been in the Foreign Service and was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and then others, I would sort of have to look at a list at the time to make sure. Others who were interested in foreign affairs, interested in how the United States tackled its foreign affairs and therefore interested in the quality of people in the Foreign Service. The legislation got through and got through with comfortable margins in both houses.

All along, staying in close touch, regular touch with AFSA and making sure they felt they were part of the process.

Q: The American Foreign Service Association? Essentially the Foreign Service union?

BARNES: Yes, that's right.

Q: What were the problems in the first place in recruiting women? Were there problems in recruiting women or had it been an attitudinal thing or what?

BARNES: I think to start with, and I go back now to when I came into the Foreign Service in the early '50s, there was almost a built-in assumption that diplomats are men. Or men are diplomats. In my first couple of posts, I think there were no more than two women who were Foreign Service Officers, a few more in USIA (U.S. Information Agency).

Secondly, although I know this more anecdotally rather than scientifically, even by those women who were in the Foreign Service, they were discriminated in terms of job responsibilities, job opportunities. These sorts of things which would lead later to the suit that we were talking about before.

Probably a third factor was a feeling on the part of the Department's both top management and the bureau of personnel management that sure, women could take the exam if they wanted to, and they could stand for the oral exam, and if they passed, that would be OK but nothing like an active attempt to say to women, "There is a place for you in the Foreign Service." Which is where Cy Vance in essence came down.

Q: Given this new atmospherics how did you approach these issues? First let's talk about women and then we will talk about minorities.

BARNES: Some crossover in the sense that the attitudes that I talked about would apply to minorities, particularly black Foreign Service as well.

What we did in effect was to set up a, I don't know if we called it a taskforce, I have forgotten now, but it was to devise some special processes to get the word out particularly in the case of recruitment to American colleges and universities that women were wanted in the Foreign Service, minorities were wanted in the Foreign Service. In the case of minorities it would mean going to the traditional black colleges. It meant some consultations with minority and women officers who were in the Foreign Service such as there were and getting their input and in some cases help in terms of trying to find ways to be more effective in our promotion of the idea. That meant some stepping up of recruitment, of the number of people we took over all, but with the idea that we would look particularly for women and minorities, a combination of those efforts.

Plus in the context of the Foreign Service Act making sure we had support from the members of Congress in these efforts so that it was not only our department or part of our department, but there was political support for our their ideas as well.

Q: Looking at it in practical terms, once you recruited women, I would imagine that family needs became a major factor of keeping them in, wasn't it? In other words, they could have husbands and children without having to leave.

BARNES: Those are some of the complex equation. For example, not all Foreign Service spouses would necessarily want to become Foreign Service Officers but they might want to work at post, at least on a part time basis so we found ourselves again with the leadership of Cy Vance and Gaye Vance for that matter, she was very interested in this as well. Working with the Family Liaison Office which was now looking for ways to reach understanding with foreign governments which would enable spouses of American Foreign Service people to work in exchange for spouses of foreign service people from other countries working in the United States.

The concerns that you mentioned overlapped to some extent, that is, the concerns of families and concerns for their spouses, I would say remain, at least for the period I was involved, stay somewhat separate.

Q: In recruiting women, African Americans, or Hispanics was there some feeling that these recruits coming from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds would need special care and training?

BARNES: Yes and no. Yes, to the extent that the Foreign Service culture was distinct. As with most Americans you have to do a certain amount of acclimatization with any American coming into the Foreign Service, so in that sense, that wouldn't necessarily differ.

Secondly, efforts on the part of the career counselors that I was talking about earlier particularly in junior officer ranks, to be sensitive to any of those aspects, including cultural aspects. I had on my staff when I was director general of personnel a black woman who was terrific in this role.

Q: Who was this?

BARNES: Janet Hall. Also because of her ability to understand, what should I say, non-black culture. She was a person of great self confidence, very intelligence, and great empathy. But we didn't have enough Janets, but that is one example of some of the sorts of things that could be done.

The other thing that Cy Vance would work on would be to encourage us to look at opportunities for what are called "stretch assignments," that is, an assignment above your grade level, for women and minorities. This would in effect provide them with extra opportunities to try to demonstrate what they were capable of doing.

Q: I wonder if this promotion of women and minorities, given the built-in competition for assignments, wouldn't spark some sort of backlash.

BARNES: Actually, it didn't happen. I am not sure in retrospect I can analyze why. It may have been that we were at one level so unsuccessful in finding opportunities; the total number of opportunities was not so great. I'd like to think of a more charitable interpretation, but that's possible.

Secondly, FSOs, in my judgment, for the most part are pretty realistic people and just as they recognized that they may not get to be an ambassador because a number of people from outside the career service were named as ambassadors, even if they might have been better qualified. They also know that there is the culture, not unique to the Foreign Service, of who knows whom. In my own case for instance where I went to a friend of mine and asked to be his DCM and the fact that he knew me, gave me an advantage. Now the fact that I also happened to be qualified as an interpreter in Romanian probably was more important. So I think there was not enough and there were enough,...we tried to make decisions on the basis of the overall merit, so that although race or gender might be a factor, it was usually probably not the dominate factor. Now if somebody felt that they had been discriminated against because there was a race element or gender element, that's possible.

Q: Did you feel when you were director general that you were fighting the status quo of the bureaucracy or was it more a matter of working with the bureaucracy to find a solution?

BARNES: Some of both. Again, having the support, the very clear support, might I say, the almost impassioned on Cy Vance's part; he felt very strongly about this element of inequity in the Foreign Service. Here we are supposedly representing our country. We are not representing our country. We are not representative in that sense. So people knew that this was the policy. It was a definite policy. It didn't necessarily mean they were happy with it.

Second, going back to the question of how do you do this, how do you accomplish it, certainly in trying to work with the different bureaus, with people who dealt with the assignment questions and in effect recruiting they would feel sometimes that the central system was interfering more in their work than they would like to be the case.

I mentioned earlier that in addition to assignments and counseling functions, not only were there assignment officers in the bureau of personnel, but they had very close, and had to have very close links with the geographic and functional bureaus. It sometimes happened one takes on the view of one's clients; so you had in some instances both the executive director of a bureau and the key assignments officer complaining about an assignment which at least the director general's office felt ought to go to a woman or a minority. There was some of that.

Q: Were you running across the attitude, we can't put a woman into Saudi Arabia or we can't have a woman in such-and-such an area because the society won't take them?

BARNES: Yes. Even that was beginning to change somewhat. You might not put a woman into Saudi Arabia but you might put a woman into Morocco. You could and we did at that point have some women Arabists. So I would say, may be in a few instances, the decision was that assignment of a woman or a minority had too many potential negative consequences to go ahead. On the whole without saying we were always wise, we tried to be very conscientious of the possible backlash effect in the country concerned. But also very conscience of what we felt was to say, OK, our job is to try to find out some way to doing what we think needs to be done, of giving opportunity.

Q: Were you director general at the time when the sort of under court orders the State Department had to do more about its discrimination problem?

BARNES: That was just beginning. That was raised more after I left. There was some of that, but more occurred later.

Q: Were there any other major problems you dealt with? There seems to be sometimes a problem of getting rid of people, the poor performers.

BARNES: It's a selection-out process. It applies to Foreign Service officers, but not as such to staff officers and civil service.

Q: What did you do? Did you have sort of places you sort of had to force bureaus or something to accept certain people?

BARNES: Well, there are always people who are hard to place; hard to place because of limited talents, hard to place, well, its almost the same thing, so called "corridor reputation" which may or may not be accurate. Sometimes there were what were called "forced placements" and the bureau would have to be told to take so-and-so. Now that involved a lot of counseling also, as much with the bureau as with the individual officer as well.

BARNES: My experience obviously was in good part in the context of my role at the State Department, but we had to be very aware, of course, that the White House personnel office would have candidates for ambassadorships or for senior positions in the State Department. What we tried to do was to prepare ourselves ahead of time, knowing that there is a certain calendar, not precise, but in terms of half years or so, when time would come for considering replacements for people now serving or consider the possibility of their continuing in their present position. So part of our standard operating procedure was to bear that list in mind, focus on the timing, and then keep generating ideas as to people who might be suitable replacements or raising the question should the person continue in that position for somewhat longer.

Q: One of the stereotypes some FSOs are prepared to believe is that middle career people who serve as special assistants to high ranking people at State, when the time comes for them to get a new assignment, they are usually promised by their ranking principles good jobs, even ambassadorial positions, and do receive such onward assignments, regardless of qualification. Did you run across any validity to this?

BARNES: Well, let me put perhaps too benign an aspect on the comment you just made. At least from my own experience, I tend to think of the assignment process, particularly for the senior positions, ambassadorships, deputy assistant secretaries and so on, as a collaborative process. That is, where we welcomed the input of the assistant secretaries or even more senior officers, but had our own ideas. This then meant that we and they, and "they," of course, being all through the department and the field, we and "they" would in fact negotiate. It was as simply or complicated as that because the negotiations could obviously be a situation where we saw pretty much the same criteria as operative, for example, was a language required? Did the person have that language competence, or was it not, did it make that much difference? Did it make any difference whether the person had any previous experience, either in Washington or overseas, that was relevant to that next assignment? And that again could be geographically focused; it could be focused in terms of subject matter as well.

Q: How about the White House? Did you have much success...first what Administration was this? You were Director General from when to when?

BARNES: This was the Carter Administration. I was DG from December 1977 to February 1981. As to the White House, actually I had very little direct dealing with the White House myself. Those were handled primarily the Deputy Secretary and or the Under Secretary for Management. Now, in considering how to approach a particular set of assignment questions, and we tended to group them together, not necessarily numbers, but in terms of periodic attention. Let's say, we knew there were a half a dozen assignments coming up that needed to be made which were at the senior ambassadorial or under secretary, deputy under secretary positions. What we then would do was make up our own list of requirements and possible candidates; rely then on the Under Secretary for Management, who was Ben Read most of the time that I was there. And then some deliberations in a special committee, which the Deputy Secretary chaired, on the more important assignments. In other words, this was a series of vetting actions as well. But from my own stand point as the Director General, I got the White House inputs, so to speak, filtered before I got involved.

Q; How did things go regarding the issue, which now has been long resolved, of getting more women into the senior ranks. Was this something you had to deal with?

BARNES: Definitely, and that took the form primarily, in this process I am just describing, that is, in looking for candidates for upcoming assignments, you would look for the factors that I mentioned. We should also be conscience of the question of providing more opportunities for minorities, or for women.

Q: Did you find the Carter White House really pushing for this?

BARNES: I am not conscious at this remove anyway, with that much in the way of push, but I would explain that, at least in part, by the fact that particularly the two individual to whom I alluded, the Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher and Ben Read, the Under Secretary for Management, had this very high on their agendas, so if we didn't, as the Director General's Office didn't bring it up, they were very likely to bring it up. I assume that reflects some White House involvement, but I don't know what specifically.

Q: Was the American Foreign Service Association, AFSA, a powerful player in assignments?

BARNES: At the time I was Director General, AFSA was particularly relevant in the context of the new Foreign Service Act, which eventually became the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Our discussions and negotiations with them were almost entirely in that context. AFSA clearly would favor more assignments, more senior level assignments being given to career people rather than non-career people, knowing that there would be some non-career people, AFSA would obviously pressure on the career side. But I don't recall getting into situations where AFSA said in effect, "This is a candidate that you ought to take. This is somebody you shouldn't take."

Q: Given the range of employee issues, travel allowances, etc, what sort of a player was AFSA?

BARNES: The period I am talking about was almost entirely coterminous with the effort to get the new Foreign Service Act passed. So our dealings with AFSA, I don't know if I can give you're a percentage, but were a large, large percentage were in that context. And that discussion, of course, had a variety of aspects, because the bill itself was very encompassing, because it was the first revision, the first replacement, in years, since the 1946 act.

Q: From your perspective, how did you feel about the new Foreign Service Act? Was it positive one...?

BARNES: I'm not sure I'm a good person to ask because I was so much involved, I may have lost some of my perspective. I would like to think I would have gained perspective, but I'm not certain that is the case.

Q: As opposed to making a disinterested comment, how did you feel about it at the time?

BARNES: At the time...perhaps two, may be three, aspects come to mind. One, the fact that there was a close involvement, not always agreement, but close involvement, with AFSA. That meant that there was input on behalf of the employees of the Foreign Service and there were comparable, at least, discussions going on at the time about the Civil Service component, but I'm focusing now only on the Foreign Service Act. Secondly, the fact that we developed, and a lot of the credit here goes to Ben Read, developed a very close and, what should I say, friendly but not uncritical, relationship with AFSA, so it was a joint effort to try to persuade the appropriate members of the congress that there was a need for legislation and secondly, that what we were advocating was reasonable and useful.

Q: One of the driving forces, it appeared to me, was the assumption the career service had too many senior officers and the idea in the new law was to have a weeding out process which hit heavily on the senior officer ranks, and therefore stop the loss of people who couldn't get into the senior ranks, but nevertheless, knew a great deal about important issues. Was this a concern?

BARNES: It was a concern. In part the discussion, the debate, over the new act came out of a feeling that the original act, the 1946 act, which did have some provisions for selection out, had not been effective. There needed to be something that was more demanding and the trade-offs in getting something like that, despite the loss, as you say, of people who had talents. Our calculation was that moving in the direction of somewhat more stringent requirements in balance was necessary.

Q: I've looked at this over the years and the Foreign Service Act put quite a bit of emphasis on executive skills. Really, if you look at the role of American diplomats, it sounds great to have someone who is a good manager to run an embassy, but that might not be what you really need in a good number of cases. One, you need people who know a country or know an area, or an issue like non-proliferation and executive skills are pretty far down the line. Good negotiator and all that. You need both, but there seems to be an undo concentration on making sure the person had checked off that they had run things or done things of this nature.

BARNES: Stu, that is an argument I think that could go on indefinitely without resolution, because if you place your emphasis on having the skills to the point of expertise on every subject, which is what I think is the conclusion of that, and don't prepare for the changing of environments, which at least at that point were exemplified by an ambassador's or DCM's requirements to manage programs that are not just the traditional programs - you get into AID, public relations, the USIA aspects. You lose there. The only response that I can give you, that is somewhere between an answer and a hope, is that we had some faith in the capability of senior management to be able to find ways of balancing these requirements. Up to a point that expertise, could be provided, can be provided through people in the Washington-based Civil Service. Not completely because the overseas component is essential too. But it is a constant juggling act. I don't know if I was fortunately or unfortunate to have left the Director General's position shortly after the legislation was enacted and to have viewed then the subsequent period, the subsequent activities from a field standpoint and not from a Washington standpoint where some of the things you were talking about would be more visible. I did not feel in the three assignments I had after I was DG that I sensed or worried about the problems you are talking about.

Q: For developing management skills...during the time the two of us were in the Foreign Service, there wasn't a great deal of training as to what makes a good manager. You sort of had a job and you learned on the fly. If you were good manager you got it by observation or osmosis, or you just had the reflexes. Was there cooperation or planning on the part the Director General and FSI as far as how do we train managers and how do we bring our people up to speed.

BARNES: What was known then and may or may not exist now with the Mid-Career Course and also the Senior Seminar, that type of vehicle, and then some of the assignments outside the Department to other departments provided some of that broadening. But again my perspective changed from a very broad one as Director General to much more focused one as ambassador. So there may be things I didn't observe because I was not in a position to observe.

Q: When you were Director General did you get involved in problems of discrimination?

BARNES: I don't recall any specific problems of that nature. But on the other hand I do know there was a strong role in that period played by the EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) office. I don't know if you knew John Burrows, who was in charge of that. He would bring to our attention, if need be, efforts that ought to be undertaken. There is a lot of emphasis at that time too on a matter I touched on earlier, that is the creation and promotion of opportunities for women in the Foreign Service.

Q: Was Alison Palmer a player at that time?

BARNES: She had been before I became Director General, but not that involved during the period I was there. I frankly don't remember at this point why that should be the case, but definitely she had been important.

Q: You left that job in 1980, before the election?

BARNES: No, I left that job after the elections in late January, early February 1981.

Q: Where did you go?

BARNES: Limbo.

Q: (laughter) What was limbo like?

BARNES: The then new administration, among its early actions decided to choose Joan Clark to be the new Director General. But there was no assignment for me at that immediate junction, so what I was asked to do was to take on the responsibility to put into practice, or into action, various aspects of the new Foreign Service Act. So I moved from the sixth floor, not to the basement of the building, but to the first floor; off the EEO Office as a matter of fact, with one staff assistant for about five months.

Q: Was this part of the shaking down process of the new Administration, or did you feel you were in someone's bad book?

BARNES: No, having had some experience with assignments, I took it as an indication they wanted to move on as many fronts as they could including designation of people for those positions. Because I ended up being designated the next ambassador to India, a couple of months later, I had no complaint.

Q: Did you sense a different approach toward the State Department at the time?

BARNES: No more than I guess I would have expected from any new administration. I had comparatively little to do with the senior management of the Department at that point. Because I was working on the implementation of the Foreign Service Act, but that was not something on the whole that required their involvement. I got a little more involved with some people on the Seventh Floor, about four or five months later when it became clear that I might be selected to go to India, and began discussing matters that involved U.S. India policy.

Q: What part of the new Foreign Service Act were you working on?

BARNES: Pretty much across the board. Nothing that occurs to me at this point was particularly time consuming. Mostly like taking the new Act and working with a couple of people in the Personnel Bureau about what the Act required, how it would be translated into practice.

Q: Was there a lot of, I won't say opposition, but foot-dragging, on the part of people who were involved in implementing the new Act?

BARNES: Not that I recall.

Q: How did the Indian appointment become available? This is obviously an important assignment. Historically, a great many people who have held that job have been political appointees, and this is a new Administration.

BARNES: Perhaps two aspects. One, I had been asked on occasion during that first period by people in the new Administration on the Seventh Floor, what I would be interested in. It was somewhat casual and not that focused, but I remember indicating that I had some background in South Asia; my first assignment had been Bombay and one of my more recent assignments had been Kathmandu. So, I suggested that might be relevant. I think a second aspect, hard to weigh it, but I think probably had some relevance; the perception of people in the new Administration towards India was on the whole was pretty negative. This was the perception of Indian non-alignment as resulting in, not alignment, but a leaning toward the Soviet side of things. It's just speculation on my part, but I think I benefited from the fact that nobody was paying that much positive attention to India at that point, so it didn't get to be one of the appointments which drew a lot of Seventh Floor attention.

Q: There does seem to be a certain relationship over the years, the Democrats seem to be more interested in India and the Republicans interested in Pakistan; it doesn't always hold, but it seems to be a little of that there.

BARNES: I think that is probably fair, particularly because of Indian politics at the time, and this was true with Indira Gandhi in particular. Also it was a function of the intensity of the Cold War; and lastly, maybe it is Cold War, maybe its more general, the eruption of problems in South Asia, Afghanistan would be a case in point. But I think you are probably right. That had been the earlier case, but look at the present Administration. They have been able to do things in the relationship with India, particularly in the nuclear field, which I think would have been hard to imagine not so many years ago.

Q: You've told us your very first assignment in the Foreign Service was to Bombay in 1951. Thirty years later you will serve as Ambassador from 1981 to 1985. [Editor's Note: Ambassador Barnes presented his credentials on November 17, 1981 and departed post in June 1985.] Before you went to post, what was the situation in India? Who was the prime minister? How were relations? What was going on there?

BARNES: The Prime Minister at the time was Indira Gandhi who had been ousted from office by elections some years earlier and had come back on an abolish poverty platform, and in part on the basis of not very great competence of the party that had taken her place. The attitude in Washington, because of the extreme, I would say non-alignment, approach of India, plus by that time you were beginning to get the spill over from the Afghan situation and the India government, if anything, was "understanding" about the Soviet motives for moving into Afghanistan. Whereas the United States was just beginning to figure out ways to dislodge the Soviets from there, which of course was a preoccupation for a number of years after that. All in all a negative cast, perception from the U.S. government's standpoint. Does the name Bud McFarlane mean anything to you? He was National Security Advisor. I mention him because about the time I was getting ready to go to India later in the year, he made a trip to Pakistan and to India, and brought back, not surprisingly in the context I was describing, pretty negative impressions of the Indian situation and its potential for complicating, if not harming, the U.S. policy as seen at that time.

Q: As you prepared for your congressional hearings and all, what issues did you perceive were going to be particularly important?

BARNES: Security, in the context I was talking about, the Afghan situation and Indian sympathy, if not actual support, for the Soviet position. Indo-Pakistan relations in the sense that Pakistan was seen, the phrase varied, as a key bulwark against Soviet intentions. Domestically, inhospitable Indian attitudes toward foreign investment in general, but American investment in particular. A series of problems or complaints from the American side, which were matched in their own way by the Indian side. The atmosphere was something between sour and...can't think of a good next sour word.

Let me recount one aspect that modifies what I just said. My appointment as Ambassador to India came through somewhere like June or so, and I spent the next couple of months with the usual preparations for an ambassador, but also spent some time at FSI with Hindi language lessons. In roughly October of that year there was an international gathering at Cancun, Mexico. I've forgotten under whose auspices it was held but it happened to include among the invited guests as heads of government, heads of state, both President Reagan and Indira Gandhi. Somebody in the White House was wise enough, at least in my judgment, to figure out that it would not be a good idea not to have the President meet with Indira Gandhi. He was in any case scheduled to meet with General Zia-ul-Haq, who at that point was the President of Pakistan. That idea went ahead with a certain amount of fear and trepidation on the part of various people in both the White House and at State. Not only would they not hit it off, but they would not hit it off so badly that a bad situation might be made worse. Dick Allen, who was the National Security Advisor, at that period and I talked after the meeting so I could get a fill in for how it went and in essence what he said was that it was remarkable how well they got on, much to everyone's surprise, and I think he said, or may be its my own imagination at this point, that it may have surprised the two of them themselves. So, I set off for Delhi at the end of that year with a somewhat better chance at good atmospherics than what I mentioned earlier.

Q: Well, Ronald Reagan was known for his charm. He got along extremely well with (British Prime Minister) Margaret Thatcher, (German Chancellor) Helmut Kohl. Particularly coming after the Nixon period, Kissinger got no where with Indira Gandhi. Did you find, this is jumping ahead a bit, that the Gandhi-Reagan relationship made your work a little easier?

BARNES: Definitely. Some months later, again with the Pakistan element in mind, the White House was drawing up its list of state visits for the ensuing year, 1982. Because of the continuing concern over Afghanistan it was deemed important to invite (President) Zia to pay a state visit to the United States and there was some discussion in Washington, which we in (New) Delhi took part, if you are inviting (President) Zia, should you invite Indira Gandhi? Or do you need to invite Gandhi just in case, to avoid other complications from the Indian standpoint? So, the decision was "yes" let's invite Indira Gandhi as well. So, we then began in Delhi quite an active period of preparing the ground, ideas, and proposals to send back to Washington as to what could be considered possible topics, possible approaches, and possible discussion themes. In brief I think again, going back to Cancun, they had a reasonably pleasant, satisfactory discussion with each other in Washington. The state dinner went well; in fact all the atmospherics were positive. A couple of things were decided upon in terms of programs which might be considered to be undertaken particularly in the area of science and agriculture.

Q: When you went to post could you describe the embassy, some of the people, your DCM. How well versed were they in Indian affairs?

BARNES: The DCM was actually someone 4. The previous DCM was scheduled to leave. Marion Creekmore, do you know him? We had a pretty good mix of people who had a background in South Asia, which I found useful. We had a good Science Attaché^{1/2}, because science was one of the areas we needed to work on. Without grading individuals, we had a good to very good staff of people.

Q: What was the political situation inside India when you got there?

BARNES: Indira Gandhi, as I said, was back in power, after having been out for a couple of years as I mentioned earlier. Pakistan, from the Indian standpoint, continued to be, from the Indian standpoint, a threat and there were increasing incidents in Kashmir, which the Indians were convinced were Pakistani sponsored or encouraged, which was probably correct.

One issue that came up fairly soon was that of supply of nuclear fuel to an Indian east coast reactor, it was one that had been constructed with American blessing, if not American assistance a number of years earlier. But then the Indians had detonated their own nuclear explosion which in effect was one of the causes which contributed to the non-proliferation legislation in this country. But that was pre-NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), but the question already arose from the U.S. standpoint whether the U.S. could continue to provide nuclear fuel to that reactor as we had undertaken to do earlier or whether the Indian action cancelled that obligation. The solution, if that is the right word, which was worked out in that period, and I was involved in some of that, was that the French government would supply the fuel with American acquiescence. This was agreeable to the Indians and I became involved in some negotiations with the French ambassador in (New) Delhi. But as is obvious now, for the last year or so, the efforts of this Administration to try to work out a different type of nuclear deal with India, the problem has not gone away yet.

Q: During your tour in India, what was your impression of the Congress Party? Was it sort of getting too old, been around too long?

BARNES: Indira Gandhi was such a dominant figure that she is almost a substitute, vocabulary-wise, for the Congress Party at that point. There were other people who were prominent at the state level and to some extent at the national level, but almost anything that was important in the area of foreign policy, not to mention domestic, involved her, or could involve her. So, you can talk about the Congress Party, but it did not have that much meaning as a political party in terms of the overall policies of the government.

Q: Talking about the time you were there, the Soviets and the Indians had a pretty close relationship in a number of areas, but it never seemed like a very good fit. Would you comment on that?

BARNES: Perhaps there was a contradiction. It wasn't a warm relationship, but it was warm enough to serve both countries purposes. It is useful from the Soviet standpoint to have a major non-aligned country "understand" Soviet interests, Soviet concerns, and so on. But Indira Gandhi, at the same time, made it quite clear that she was the Prime Minister of India and India was not a Soviet satellite state and India would not necessarily do "A," "B," or "C" just because the Soviets wanted it done. And although I don't...in fact I know I can't prove...my own guess at the time was that she and the Congress Party leadership were upset with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They didn't mind the distraction that might provide for the Pakistanis. From their standpoint, such a distraction might deflect Pakistani attention from Kashmir. She wasn't in anyway interested in India becoming or even appearing to become a Soviet satellite. I think part of the reasons she and Ronald Reagan got along well was that she knew it was in India's interest to have a better rather than a worse relationship with the United States. That didn't mean that she like much of what the United States did in that area, or elsewhere, or liked superpowers in general.

Q: Now, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979 and you arrived in India a year later. Was this at all a subject of discussion or concern in India at the time, or was there an acceptance of the Soviet move?

BARNES: I would say on the whole it was...I would make a distinction between acceptance and acquiesce. It is not something the Indians would have sought. It is not something, as I think I implied earlier, that they therefore welcomed. But because of the Pakistan element it was useful to India, which seemed a pretty utilitarian approach.

Q: There is this Foreign Service image that relations between the embassies in Islamabad and New Delhi were contentious. How did that work during your ambassadorship?

BARNES: It didn't, in the sense that it wasn't contentious. I think there were two or three ambassadors in Islamabad during the time I was in India [Editor's Note: While Ambassador Barnes was in New Delhi, U.S. ambassadors to Pakistan were Ronald Spiers (1981-1983) and Deane Hinton (1983-1986)]. We exchanged visits; I went to Pakistan at least a couple of times. We tried to keep each other posted on things that were going on that we thought were relevant. I didn't feel any animosity...sure you get a certain amount, I suppose you would call it, of localities but it didn't, to the best of my recollection, distract us that much from what we were both attempting to do. Dean Hinton was there part of the time; Ron Spiers part of the time. Am I missing anyone else?

Q: India is a large country with an ancient and storied culture. How did your staff respond to such an absorbing place?

BARNES: My best recollection is that the staff on the whole was able to become comfortable in the Indian milieu. Not unexpectedly, there were common concerns about health and for people who had not been in South Asia before, just a certain amount of adjustment to the sheer numbers of people. I don't recall any particular problems.

Q: How many consulates did we have in India? What was their relationship to the embassy?

BARNES: Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. I was fortunate to have good consul generals in these posts during most of that period. I tried to travel to the consulates a couple of times a year. Part of my visit would be to travel to areas outside of the consulate city; to other parts of the consular district. Usually the consul general would come along. Periodically we would get together in Delhi and coordinate our activities.

Q: One of the Indian states, Kerala, had a communist government. Were we at all concerned?

BARNES: Two states. Kerala on the west coast south of Bombay, in which the communist party of India; there are two communist parties in India, had a leading role in the state government. The other was West Bengal, Calcutta, and that was what was called the CPM, Communist Party-Marxist, which is in the present government and is as a matter of fact playing an important role. It is major coalition party for the current Congress-led government. They could even bring the government down, if they thought an issue important enough. It is a little hard to tell what the "Marxist" label means these days.

Q: While you were there, did we feel these local communist governments had close ties to the Soviet system, agents of the Soviet Union, or were they pretty much Indian?

BARNES: Pretty much Indian and not Soviet agents.

Q: What was it like to deal with the Indian government? I had some dealings with the Indian Consul General in Saigon. A difficult interaction. It seems like the Americans and the Indians both like to preach. (laughter)

BARNES: We both are very aware of our own capabilities and our own, should I say, righteous approach to problems. It may be unkind to Americans, but sometimes we resent anyone else preaching, since we assume we have sole right to the preaching platform.

Q: Did you find that we often were talking past each other?

BARNES: I guess I would make two comments. One, you had to keep reminding yourself particularly with certain people, certain Indians, that this was a trap you could fall into, getting overly preachy yourself. Secondly, you want to be, if not sympathetic, at least smart enough to understand what it was that the Indians were getting at and what the real problems were and what were only the surface problems. But on the whole, I found in my own interaction with people in government that you could set up a good working relationship and that there was sometimes a latent and sometimes a more openly expressed admiration for the United States and a certain, not regret, but at least a certain wish, that the relationship between the two countries was better than it was; that it ought to be better than is often was. There were periods, as for example after the Gandhi visit to the U.S. when we began to work on more cooperative projects than the sort that had been worked on in earlier years, earlier administrations. The sense that really we did indeed, not only in words, but also in terms of activities, had a lot in common. That helped.

Q: Did you find in covering India with its multiple parties and vast size that you were on the road a lot?

BARNES: Yes, but it was deliberate on my part, because of the size and diversity of the country, I thought I needed to have some sense first hand, albeit limited, of what the regional variations were or the variations, in any, in intensity of the particular issues. That is why I relied a lot on the consulates general (CG), including the trips I would make periodically and calling in the CGs to Delhi.

Q: You have a reputation of being adept at languages. You had some FSI Hindi, how useful was it?

BARNES: It was not as useful as I hoped it would be when I first started studying it, because "too many" Indians with whom I dealt were even in some ways more fluent than I in English. On the other hand, I did give occasional talks in Hindi, particularly in the rural areas, the Hindi speaking parts of India. Outside of Delhi I could use Hindi as well. I think I got a certain amount, how should I say, credit because I had made an effort to try to understand and use the language.

Q: Did you find the London School of Economics socialism was pervasive among government people, as with other former British colonies, such as in Africa?

BARNES: As much as anything I would say it was a feeling perhaps in good part inherited from the British times, but also from socialism, the role of government was important, not just in terms of necessarily government institutions, including economic institutions, but also in the sense that India couldn't allow its economic structure or economic activities to be unduly influenced by foreigners. This applies to the Soviets as well as to ourselves. Let me add one more thing which I think is more a British inheritance perhaps, although some of it goes back to Nehru's time. That is the feeling that government control or often government regulation of almost every part of economic life was necessary to safeguard the Indian people from exploitation. That may be more Fabian, I'm not sure.

Q: What sort of role did the Soviet Ambassador have? How about your relations with him?

BARNES: Our relationship was not very frequent; polite, but not a great deal of contact.

Q: Were the British pretty active there?

BARNES: Yes, the British were definitely involved and I had very close relations with the various British ambassadors.

Q: How about China?

BARNES: China, let me put it this way, friendly enough, not the point of being able to get useful, for me anyway, insights into life in India. This was still was still a period, which would last for a number of years, of tension between India and China which grew out of the early 1960s war between India and China in the Himalayas. On the other hand at one point, I wanted to get visas for China. My father-in-law was born in China of missionary parents and my wife and I and my parents-in-law wanted to take advantage of their being in Delhi visiting us to go on to China to see if we couldn't see any of the places which he had been associated as a child. So, we had the Chinese Ambassador and his wife come up to our house for tea on afternoon to solicit their support for Chinese visas. That was very non committable in terms of talking about anything very serious, very pleasant in terms of a cup of tea on an afternoon.Q: Were there any particular issues between China and India at this time?

BARNES: No, aside from that very general atmospherics. As the two countries began to develop their economies, the relationship between the two began to change ever so imperceptively. On October 31, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated. I had gotten to know Rajiv (Gandhi) the first couple of years I was there and continued to see a certain amount of him after he became Prime Minister, more than I saw or was able to see Indira. He began fairly early on in his prime ministership to loosen some of the government controls on economic activity and to at least begin thinking about other ways to organize society; over what we discussed earlier as the Fabian approach. He was invited fairly early on in his prime ministership in June 1985 to the U.S.. He had a very useful and successful visit in terms of the overall relationship, opening possibilities which had not been there with his mother. So when you are talking about Indian development, that marks, perhaps not a watershed, but at least a start.

Q: While you were there were you looking at various ethnic divisions in politics and society. After all, it was her Sikh bodyguard that killed her.

BARNES: I would say on politics you have a somewhat more open approach taken by Rajiv, than had ever been taken by Indira. He was clearly not only Prime Minister, but part of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. But he also was more of a listener and more of an innovator than his mother was. From our standpoint, we thought we should find opportunity in that change in attitude through visits that we could encourage in government and the private sector.

Q: Were we concerned that this huge and diverse country might split apart?

BARNES: No. Let me qualify that. In his mother's case, with Indira, she of course was assassinated by some angry, disaffected Sikhs who felt that her approach, her policies toward Sikh aspirations for a separate state, something even more Sikh than the state of Punjab. Yet, I don't know many of us foreign observers who can claim credit for having foreseen, before the assassination, that there were tensions there that were increasing as a matter of fact. Of course, one could go back to Gandhi to recognize the role assassination played in Indian politics. Rajiv would later be assassinated.

But a Moslem separatism, not a major force, aside from the fact that Kashmir was a case apart. Kashmir was not just a Moslem-Hindu issue, but it was Kashmiri versus various parts of India. The rest of the country, no. You had had going back to Nehru's time agitation in a number of parts of the country for what were called linguistic states, that is, in the Bombay area what ought to be predominate were the Marathi speakers; or in that in Madras that ought to be predominate were the Tamil speakers in the south. You sometimes got questions then of where the boundaries should be drawn, but that pretty much was settled on Nehru's watch by the 1960s.

Indira Gandhi at one level gave a stand-offish appearance, regal may not be the right word, but it has an element of that. At one point during our stay there, I decided to try an experiment, so to speak, I asked her to dinner and was surprised that she accepted. Not only did she accept, but she brought her son, Rajiv and her grandchildren, one of whom is now that head of the Congress Party, Rahul. And a good time was had by all, to all appearances.

Q: Let's talk about Pakistan and Kashmir. Did we have a plan or a stand on the issues, or did we hope the whole thing would go away?

BARNES: I, of course, was indirectly involved in Pakistan. The visits I mentioned were about four or five in number and it was hard to think about American interests in India without having to be aware of American interests in Pakistan. My overall impression of U.S. policy at the time was that if, with our assistance, continued pressure and in fact increased pressure could be brought on the Soviets, then they might go away. But I don't think that anyone at that time, I'm talking about the mid-1980s obviously, expected the Soviet Union to collapse in the way it did five years out.

You see this ties into Pakistan, because of the situation in Afghanistan. I guess my point was that U.S. policy toward Pakistan was that Pakistan is a front line state and Pakistan's help is needed in order to be able to carry on the proxy war in Afghanistan. That was the be all and end all. Not a great deal of concern or worry about what was happening inside Pakistan.

Q: Did you perceive within the United States either a Pakistan or Indian lobby or a congressional bloc that felt strongly about our relations one way or the other.

BARNES: I would say as a general generality that given the Cold War context, a feeling that we had to do all we could to support Pakistan because the brave Pakistanis were fighting the Soviets. With India I found, I'm thinking now of the American congress, I found a willingness to recognize, in some cases to remember from an earlier era, that the U.S. had, potentially anyway, a long-term interest in India. That if India were a success, then that success would be important in a global sense, that is, with a willingness to recognize that there was an Indian potential that was important to the U.S. and not relatively short-term which was the case in Pakistan. I couldn't give you an exact number of what later became in effect a sort of congressional India-favorable caucus, which was already taking shape at that point. I think to some extent Indira Gandhi's visit to the United States, and then Rajiv's accession later, helped people think about the fact that the situation regarding India was more complicated than there might be more benefits, interest that we had than we might initially suspect.

Q: On the nuclear issue, how did it stand at the time you were there?

BARNES: The nuclear issues, aside from the supply of fuel that I mentioned was not a major issue. This was before people started to talk about non-proliferation.

Q: How did the news of the assassination of Indira Gandhi come to you and what did we do?BARNES: I was at a session of teachers and administrators at the American school, which was a couple of blocks from the Embassy. Do you know Delhi by the way? Couple of blocks from the Embassy talking over school problems when suddenly someone dashed in and said "Indira Gandhi's been shot!" That's how I found out.

Q: How did we see the political situation? Did Rajiv seem an obvious replacement?

BARNES: There was no question it would be Rajiv. It did not take any great foresight to come to that conclusion. To the extent that we knew him, and not many Americans did, I probably knew him as well, and that wasn't very well, as much as any other American in that brief period. We had an awareness that he had some diversity of thinking on major issues, modernization in a broad sense as important, more so than his mother did. So in a sense a hope that the relationship between the United States and India could become much more, should I say, positive. The potential was there, more than the case with his mother.

Q: Within the government, did you find any of the ministries more friendly toward the United States, think of Foreign Affairs, the military, the commercial?

BARNES: What they called External Affairs, obviously, beyond that some of the science-related ministries, because we placed some emphasis on scientific cooperation - that was one of the things that come up during Indira Gandhi's visit to the States in '84. That would include agriculture where there had been an earlier history of collaboration.

Slight diversion, the U.S. had in the early '50s provided on an emergency basis a large amount of food grains. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say, as some Indians said at the time, that India was one ship load or so away from, if not starvation, at least very serious food supply problems. There was an agreement reached some years after that called the P.L. 480 agreement where the U.S. and India agreed on how the funds that India had paid for the grain, which had not been free, but it was very reduced prices; some of those funds were set aside to be used in ways the two governments could decide. So, you had things like scientific exchanges, cultural exchanges, that sort of thing which were financed by those so called surplus rupees. That was an important to mention and became more important in terms of how to cooperate using other resources while they still were available.

Q: In doing these Oral Histories I have become impressed with the role of these exchange programs have been, you might say it is one of the most important arrows in our foreign policy quiver, with long-term benefits in building ties and friendships.

BARNES: That was our case with the addition of what I have just mentioned. We had - beyond the Fulbright exchange program - we had the resources from the P.L. 480 program as well, which would give us a broader and in some ways more extensive set of resources and activities, than would otherwise be the case.

You might be interested in another anecdote. My wife and I were on our way back from the States, in fact I think it was after one of Rajiv's visits, if I am not mistaken, anyway we stopped in Paris where our son-in-law and daughter were living at the time - also Foreign Service. A phone call came through from Washington, from one of the Secretary's staff assistants telling me that as a results of the '84 election the White House or the President has decided that they wanted to nominate Chuck Percy, just defeated Senator from Illinois, as the next ambassador to India. I had been expecting, between the election, plus the amount of time I had already been in India which was getting on to four years that I would be replaced. So I said "Thank you for the news, now what?" The voice on the other end of the phone said, "You have your pick of any assignment you want, comma, provided it's in Latin America." I sort of gulped and said, "I don't know anything about Latin American." The voice said, "That's all right. Here is a list of posts which are open or will be open. You can choose one if you want to." Which is why I went to Chile, at least in part. [Editor's Note: additional comments on India and Chile are interspersed in the paragraphs toward the end of this interview.]

Q: So you went to Chile from November 1985 and left in December 1988. Do you have any explanation why you were only offered South American postings?

BARNES: Well, there is a chartable explanation which I prefer to accept, namely that I had done, or been perceived to have done, a good job in India, and maybe I could serve equally well somewhere else. That is the first part of the equation. The second, why Latin America? Other than what I was told on the phone namely that were weren't any places in areas where I had background that were then open or would be open. My son-in-law had some Latin American background so I took advantage of being with him for discussion of the opportunities in Latin America. Of the several posts that I was told were open at that point, Chile seemed to be the most interesting. So, it's as simple or as complicated as that.

Q: Who did you replace? What was the situation in Chile when you arrived?

BARNES: My predecessor was a political appointee, Jim Theberge, who had earlier experience as ambassador to Nicaragua during the Ford Administration from August 1975 to June 1977.

Going back a little bit the military had taken over in 1973 under Pinochet's command in a coup that had overthrown Salvador Allende. The military government had remained very much in charge and had loosened up on some of the restrictions, but there was no question as to who was dominate and what the policies would be which were essentially autarchic, collaboration and early sympathy with by then fairly numerous dictatorial regimes in Latin America - in Bolivia, in Paraguay, in Argentina and Peru.

The policy of the Reagan Administration during the first term toward Pinochet was essentially one of understanding and tolerance that this was an anti-communist government, which the United States needed to support and if there were human rights violations, well the United States had to be understanding, quote, unquote, if it was required in order to handle the consequences of the socialist regime of Salvador Allende. That's about it.

(Start Electronic Barnes 4, Side B)

Q: This is the continuation of our June 3, 2008 session with Harry Barnes.

BARNES: The point that I was going to make here, was that just before he left - this was roughly September-October '85 - my predecessor gave a public talk in which he said a couple of things about the importance of human rights. This had not been his emphasis up to that point, so it was something of a departure, but I think it reflected his own realization that the regime was not anywhere near living up to some of the promises it had made about paying attention to human rights questions. Yet, there was no formal change in policy by the Administration, but that was perhaps one signal

Q: There was a book [1978] and a movie [1982] entitled Missing which dealt with the first years of the Pinochet coup and the murder of an American Citizen at the time of the coup. The movie particularly was not flattering to the Embassy. Where there any reverberations from these criticisms when you were there?

BARNES: This is the problem that Nat Davis [Editor's Note: Ambassador Davis served in Chile from 1971 to 1973] faced. In the general sense that the regime had been in place sufficiently long so that its behavior might have been expected have been modified, but hadn't been. So it was really sort of a recognition of the fact that this was still a very dictatorial regime, but more specifically about reverberations, no.

Q: How about the Letelier case? This is the man who was killed by a car bomb in Sheridan Circle in Washington, D.C. in September 1976.

BARNES: In policy terms it had been shoved into the background.

Q: So what were your matching orders when you arrived in Chile?

BARNES: What I saw was an opportunity to modify the policy. I thought the policy needed to be modified and taking into account some of the things you just mentioned, but in the context of not '73 but '85, so what I did was to develop, what should I say, an outline or a brief list of points which seemed to me needed to be basic in any further American policy dealings with Chile. One was respect for human rights. Second, was support for what I guess we called at that point market economics or at least an open economic system. Thirdly, there ought to be the conscience American policy of encouraging a return to democracy. What I did was essential shop that around both within the U.S. government and up on the Hill and was able to get a consensus that these were reasonable and perhaps important elements in a rethought American policy.

You remember hearing of an article the Jean Kirkpatrick wrote in Commentary about what she in effect said there are totalitarian and authoritarian dictatorships. From the U.S. standpoint, she wrote , "We can live with authoritarian, it may not be all that desirable, but we can co-exist with them. But totalitarian we have to oppose." Chile was put in the authoritarian category in her article, which in terms of the definitions this was probably accurate. But the question I raised was: was this in American interest to maintain that sort of definition, at least in this particular case. I guess I would say somewhat to my surprise I found a much more receptive audience on Capitol Hill than I might have thought. I would have thought that the question by that time was seen as over or not that relevant. But I found people on the Hill that were receptive to it. Also within the State Department and the NSC I found a willingness to try out this sort of approach.

Q: How would you describe the human rights side of things and what happened while you were there?

BARNES: The regime had let up slightly on restrictions, for example, the press was able to raise an occasional question in the human rights context. There was some tolerance, I guess is the word I would use, for human rights related activities particularly those carried out by the Catholic Church. The then Cardinal in Santiago was someone who, should I say, sort of patronized human rights related activities using a church umbrella or church context. Partly because of the cardinal's encouragement, but partly also because of the work of people from the traditional political, non-communist parties, there began to be almost a movement or at least an effort to develop within Chile itself a popular focus on human rights concerns. A group of the traditional political parties, plus one or two which were new, but were adherents of the regime but not uncritical adherents of the regime, so it was a fairly diverse group. They came up with a declaration which they called the National Accord, which set out principles of human rights for the Chilean situation.

The Cardinal volunteered to take this Declaration to Pinochet, in the hopes that Pinochet would be understanding that something like this was possible or desirable in current Chilean history. Pinochet received the Cardinal and so many words told him, "You are nuts. This is not relevant. This has nothing to do with the needs of the country." And the conversation ended. So, that is one anecdote. A little before this I arrived at post. The Declaration came out, and the Cardinal's meeting happened a little after I got there.

Second point, from my standpoint in terms of my own activities, I had decided that I needed to say something in the traditional Ambassadorial address at the time of the presentation of credentials. I decided I needed to say something on the human rights questions. On the importance of human rights and made sure before I left Washington that the relevant people knew this is what I was planning to do so they would not be caught by surprise. What I did say was to quote Winston Churchill to the effect that nothing is more important than human rights except more human rights. Pinochet did not like that, as I found out in the succeeding weeks. I tried to pay the traditional ambassadorial calls on various government ministers; I could not get any appointments. The message was fairly clear that obviously somebody was unhappy with me. So I then decided to go see the leaders of the opposition. Which I did, and that seemed to be enough to break the logjam. I got to see the members of the government after that.

Q: Did you find any divergence among those ministers, or were they all under Pinochet's thumb?

BARNES: Well, they were all obviously responsible to Pinochet and Pinochet was not shy about exercising control. But after saying that for the most part the ministers for the most part were at least civil and in most of the relevant cases, for example the equivalent of our secretary of treasurer, the minister of finance. They not only saw me when the logjam was broken, but continued to be prepared to see me from time to time, so I had pretty good relationships with just about all. I also was able after a while to see on occasion the members of the junta, that is, the other commanders in chief. Pinochet was chair of the junta, as it were, in his capacity as commanding general of the army. But there was an admiral, there was the head of the national police, there was the head of the air force, all were part of this government group, the junta. I was able to see them, the air force, the carabineros - the police, and the navy, particularly the head of the carabineros and the air force, I saw quite frequently and had quite open relationships with them.

Q: Did you find within the government a sense of disquiet about being a pariah state, or were they a pariah state?

BARNES: Not explicitly, there was no one who said, "I'm a minister in a pariah state." But in terms of what they were prepared to talk about, for example, as time came - this is jumping ahead a little bit - as time came for the plebiscite, which was Pinochet's way of trying to continue in power I was able to have quite open, quite frank discussion with the minister of the interior about the preparations for the plebiscite. How they were going to try to make sure people knew that their vote would be counted and not siphoned off.

Talked with the minister of finance about the problems of getting foreign investment into a country which had this pariah characteristic, so on the whole, pretty good.

Q: What about the opposition groups; were they completely excluded from power or did they have influence?

BARNES: There were four or five that were significant, the Christian Democrats, the Socialist, in particular. They had no formal or even informal role as far as government was concerned. There were a couple who had family ties and I think those were used sometimes, I think, to pass messages back and forth. What they relied on primarily, within clear limitations much of the time, was to use the media, particularly the print media. Occasionally newspapers or journals would be closed down by the government, but that didn't last too long and it became increasingly infrequent. The print media, as I say, were used primarily; the electronic media began to be somewhat more important in general in the society. But only one or two channels felt they could broadcast anything that would be seen by the government as "scurrilous," or inappropriate, or improper. They, those media, and to a very limited extent some of the print media, kept testing the limits of what would be permissible. They, that is the editors and the columnists, were quite open to us in the Embassy, my colleges and USIS had good links both in terms of being able to provide information as well as to get information.

Q: Were other embassies also raising the human rights side of things?

BARNES: Yes, there was a group of us which got together periodically. The French ambassador, the Costa Rican ambassador, the Argentine ambassador, for example, compared notes on what was going on and what things we ought to be anticipating. In general it was a fairly cohesive diplomatic corps and for the most part countries were not that sympathetic to the regime. There were exemptions, such as the Paraguayan, for example, depending on who was in charge of the government.

Q: Did we have an officer or officers who were essentially building up human rights violation files and reporting back to Washington?

BARNES: This is primarily the work of our political section, but when it came to the media, USIS people were particularly involved. Our economic officer worked with representatives of some of the trade associations to try to sensitive them to the implications of Chile's being a pariah state and the non-willingness to invest, for example.

Q: What sort of human rights violations were we seeing when you were there?

BARNES: There were imprisonments, but that tended to be somewhat less and people who had been in prison were allowed to leave the country. The influence on the censorship of the media, for example.

There were occasions of, what I would call, egregious incidents of human rights violations. Roughly 1986, I think I have the year right, there were some demonstrations. They did not take place that often in Chile when I first got there. Street demonstrations are what I am talking about. Somewhat more later on though, as the system began to open up a little bit you got less in the way of demonstrations. On any event, on this particular day there were demonstrations the police used tear gas but toward the end of the day we got word that two young people who were demonstrators had been doused in gasoline and set afire. We were asked for help and we tried to find a hospital which would take the young people. The young man died of his injuries; the young woman survived and acquired a lot of plastic surgery which was done in Canada. Do you know Spanish? (No.) Well, the Spanish word for burn is "quemadura." So we talked about these two are the "quemaduros," the people who had been burned.

We were in touch with the mother of the young man and also in touch with the young woman who survived. A couple of days later there was a funeral mass at the cathedral for the young man, and my wife and I went to that. The police charged the gathering as it spilled out of the building out into the square in front of the church. So we got a little bit of the feeling of what tear gas is like. The building we were in actually at that point near to the cathedral was the human rights commission which answers in some way your earlier question. There such a thing as a human rights commission. It was able to work, but not without restrictions. The fact that the U.S. ambassador and his wife and a couple of other diplomats showed up at the service at least outside the cathedral attracted a certain amount of attention.

Among the people who heard about it was then the senior U.S. senator from the South Carolina, Jessie Helms. Within four or five days he decided he would come to Chile and investigate for himself why it was that the, as he put it, "the American flag had been displayed at the funeral service for a terrorist." One of the worse interviews I ever had was with Jessie Helms and his staff. Essentially I got a grilling from him and his staff and I know my responses did not satisfy him. But what it did was to produce even more than what I already had in the way of support in the Congress, and the Administration was very good about supporting me.

Q: Did you have any sense of where Senator Helms and his staff were coming from?

BARNES: Pinochet was a friend. He was anti-communist. He had overthrown a communist regime, the Allende regime. He was a good guy; somebody that needed to be supported.

Q: I take it you weren't exactly, during the time you were there in a chummy relationship with Pinochet.

BARNES: Here is an anecdote that illustrates this as good as any. There was in Santiago, I suppose once a year, a trade fair. The U.S. usually had a Department of Commerce booth. Local protocol required that the resident ambassador should accompany the President when the President visited the booth of the ambassador's country. So, one of my rare occasions to see Pinochet was to walk along side of him as he visited our booth; he did not skip it, which was an option I suppose he could have taken. The next day or so in the local press there appeared a picture of Pinochet and me with the heading "until next year."

The other thing I should turn to is the plebiscite.

Q: Before we get to the plebiscite, was there a distinct group of influential people who were anti-Pinochet, a society that you and your officers discovered?

BARNES: We had still very wide access in the country. I think a tribute to the longstanding relationship the U.S. had built up over the years. With the important exemption of Pinochet, we could see much of the time just about everybody else we wanted to see. Even though we may not agree on something, that pretty much ran the gamut of the political parties, except for the communist on one side and one extreme right party which had no interest in seeing us, even if we wanted to see them. Had good entre into the business community, although some of them would have reservations about what we were doing in the human rights business. But since we had as one of our principal planks promotion of free trade and free enterprise, they were content on that score. On what you might call the cultural side of things, the media, again very good access.

Q: What about the economy? The U.S. supported free trade and all, but tell us about the influence of the Chicago boys.

BARNES: The leading Chicago boy had become, by the time I got there, minister of finance, a man by the name of Hernán Búchachi who was responsible for the further development of the private enterprise nature of the Chilean government as well as getting loans from a number of international sources. The fact that the country under Pinochet, but I think in good part, thanks to Búchachi, had moved in the direction of promoting private enterprise, reducing government controls. This was both to our advantage and to theirs. The exception there was on the human rights side, where were pieces of American legislation, like export import and so on, which had human rights requirements. And you had to provide certification, sometimes we couldn't do that.

Q: Were you under pressure from economic sources in the States or something to certify the uncertifiable as far as human rights was concerned?

BARNES: No, except for that one occasion legislatively where there were some restrictions, but that didn't keep us from making public statements from time to time about Chilean behavior. For example, roughly six months after I arrived, so that was early 1986, there were meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission where Chile was criticized and the U.S. voted - this is a change from the first Reagan term - and the U.S. would vote in favor of the complaints on Chile's behavior.

Q: Chile is a major source of fruits imported to the U.S. in our off-season. Was that happening in the mid-'80s? Were there any restrictions on that when you were there?

BARNES: It had been restricted by congressional action earlier. While we were there we were able to get some modification on the grounds that the military would be needed in a democratic Chile. Our military to military relations with Chile were not extensive, but there were some links that went back a number of years in terms of American command force. The Southern Command has some periodic visits they would pay for example. But, no, we were able to get a number of things together although the might look a little convoluted.

Q: What about fruit and economic things like that? Was there much trade, because it really became big later?

BARNES: No, not much trade. Not in terms of significant changes.

Q: Let's talk about the plebiscite. When did this happen and how did it develop?

BARNES: Pinochet had, as I think he himself said from time to time, had made a gift to the people of Chile in the form of a new Constitution, having done away the previous one, the Allende and earlier periods. One of the things the people of Chile had a chance to approve was that Constitution in a plebiscite in 1980. Of course, the plebiscite vote was in favor of the new Constitution. The Constitution provided that after eight years there would be an election in which the people of Chile would have a chance to decide whether they wished to have Pinochet continue or be replaced. If they wanted him to be replaced there would have to be a competitive election. With 1988 that was eight years later. The 1988 plebiscite was a plebiscite in the sense it was more of Pinochet, another eight years of Pinochet, or go to a competitive election.

This gradually began to snowball in the sense of citizen participation. You had groups of people, one for example which was taking no sides on the plebiscite outcome or not, but was saying it was Chileans' obligations as citizens to vote. How you vote is up to you, but vote. We were able to provide some assistance through the National Endowment for Democracy in terms of how one organizes campaigns, since enough time had gone by 1973 was the last election. The aspect of the plebiscite one worried about was that if some way the government would find a modality for skewing it or if not worse than that. So a lot of emphasis from the standpoint of those of us on the outside, this was pretty much a coordinated effort. We coordinated with the Brazilians and with the Argentinean, the British and the French, and so on, in terms of technical expertise and support.

The effort to persuade people to take part was on the whole quite successful and not interfered with by the government as far as we could tell. But to jump forward a bit, or more than a bit to get to the plebiscite proper. This was scheduled for early October in 1988. By that time it was clear that Pinochet was as convinced as any that the country needed his rule. No doubts on that score. In fact there was an amusing cartoon in one of the papers, which gives a sense of the fact that the media were not completely under control, which showed a chair occupied by a figure which everyone recognized as Pinochet, looking at a television screen with "1988" on it. The idea was clear this was 1988 and Pinochet was going to win. But behind that TV screen was another TV screen which had a "2016" on it and another TV with "2024." The cartoon conveying the happy visage of Pinochet contemplating all these extensions.

The head of the campaign to participate was a good friend of ours. She was very carefully non-partisan. We were also on very good terms with the head of what was called the campaign for the "No," that is to vote no in the plebiscite. Meaning no more indefinite eight year terms. We were also on pretty good terms with the campaign for the "Yes" although they probably rightly suspected that we were no in favor of Pinochet's continuation. But that was not a formal statement on our part. In any event, the head of the campaign to get out the vote and her husband, a couple days before the plebiscite was to take place, came around to our house one evening, we were very good friends, but they didn't usually show up in the middle of the evening.

It turned out that the wife had been contacted by the general commanding the garrison of Santiago who was a family friend. They both had kids in the same school. He told her that there was a possibility that the troops would be called out on the plebiscite day to quote put down disorders unquote. We took that very seriously just knowing her, knowing that she would not exaggerate or falsify anything. Her advice was that I go talk to the head of the opposition, that is, the group campaigning for a "no" vote, and see what he thought about how to react to that and whether to take it seriously. She thought we should, but she wanted us to get a political judgment, as she was a non-political person.

I went around to see this individual, who parenthetically became the next president of Chile a year to two later, and he took it very, very seriously. So what I did was to get in touch with the people in the Department and urged them to call in the Chilean ambassador and say we've heard these reports and we trust they are not true, but just in case, you ought to know how seriously we take them. That was on a Sunday night that the Chilean ambassador was called in in Washington. By chance the Press Spokesman the next day at the noon briefing mentioned that the Chilean ambassador had been called into the Department on Sunday, the concern expressed was about the outcome, procedure, of the Chilean plebiscite. The Chilean government denied it and I can't be sure to this day whether this was a commanding general's mistaken impression or what it was, but in any event there were no demonstrations by the military.

Q: Prior to the plebiscite, how did we see the vote going, provided there was no military interference?

BARNES: We thought it could be quite close, because Pinochet had and appealed still to people old enough to remember the Allende era and some of the problems of that era. We guessed, I guess is the way I would have to put it, based on the polling that had been done by organizations we confidence in, including people who were, what should I say, were very much non-partisan, as well as those inclined one way or the other. Combination of those sources, our judgment was that the no vote would probably win some margin more than a narrow margin. It wasn't a huge margin, but it was an adequate margin.

The P.S. (postscript) to that story which I got later from the commanding general of the air force, whom I've mentioned...let me back up a moment. The night of the plebiscite what was very strange was that state TV ran only one report about seven o'clock in the evening and the results at that point showed that the "yes" vote, the government vote, was ahead. After that they started running old sitcoms (situation comedies). One sort of had to wonder what was going on. The Catholic Church sponsored, probably still does, one TV station at that time and they had a panel discussion going toward the end of the evening. One of the panelists they had on was one of the leading supporters of the "yes" vote. During that panel discussion probably around eleven o'clock or so the panel came on and this particular individual who had been a minister in a previous government years back and had a good reputation, he said, "I think the "no" vote has won."

Still nothing on the government channels. But the TV showed a little after that, a half an hour or so later, were pictures of the other commanders of the armed forces, that is, the air force, the carabineros, the navy going toward the presidential palace and obviously a meeting of the junta with Pinochet. (Fernando) Matthei, the air force general was stopped by a reporter and was asked what had happened. He said, "I think the "no" vote has won." He's very outspoken in general and not liked by Pinochet for that reason. He told me later that when the four of them had assembled, that Pinochet had already prepared a draft of a proclamation extending the state of emergency in effect annulling the plebiscite. As a result the other three refused to go along, which one could not have predicted at that time. So it was a fairly dramatic evening.

Q: What happened afterwards from your perspective?

BARNES: If you can have flood gates that are good things, the flood gates opened. People knew that Pinochet had given up. They knew he would be around for a year or two, before the first free elections in 20 years would take place. No violence, however.

Q: How long after the plebiscite did you remain in Chile?

BARNES: I left a couple of months later at the end of the year.

Q: So you really weren't there for the election.

BARNES: No, but I went back for the inauguration of the new President, who was chosen by the subsequent election.

Q: This much have given a feeling of satisfaction, joy and all to you and the embassy.

BARNES: Yes, we were all trying to be, what should I say, appropriately impartial (laughter), but I'm sure we did let our prejudice show. Also the fact that a lot of Chileans expressed to us their appreciation. That meant a lot.

Q: This is part three of our interview with Harry Barnes on June 3, 2008. Let's talk a bit about Secretary of State Schultz. He was the Secretary during your ambassadorships to India and Chile. Regarding India, how stood he?

BARNES: I saw him occasionally in Washington usually in conjunction with visits of one sort or another, like when Indira Gandhi came to the States. Then he came to Delhi at the time of the funeral after she had been assassinated and what sticks in my mind as far as those of use in the embassy are concerned was his concern about security. He had us take him around the perimeter of the...do you know the embassy in New Delhi? It is quite extensive. In any case he wanted to see what was then being done, and had some ideas on what needed to be done. That sense of caring about people came across.

Second, both in India, but particularly in Chile, I got from him what I very much needed but did not automatically assume I could get and that is support when I required support. My own understanding being that I wouldn't ask him for support unless I believed I needed it at his level. But if I did, then I could count on getting it.

Q: You mentioned Senator Jessie Helms came to Chile and gave you unshirted hell, for showing up at the funeral of this young man who was burned to death. What sort of support did you get from the foreign affairs establishment in Washington? Did you have someone sit there and take notes which you sent back to Washington?

BARNES: No, I decided that I should see Helms on my own. His complaint was with me and my actions. Didn't think I should link any one else with that. His staff was there. Two or three, I've forgotten whom.

Q: Did you find any support for the Helms' stance anywhere in the State Department?

BARNES: I didn't find any real of visible support for Helms, and I don't recall anybody getting in touch with me or getting a message to me on that score. Although I admit I had a question or so myself, would I get all the support I needed. I thought I would, but until I got it, I didn't know I had it, if you know what I mean.

Q:: I've interviewed people who experienced the McCarthy years and were hung out to dry and left undefended by the State Department, which didn't stand by it people.

BARNES: Yes, perhaps the obvious thing to say here is that Helms was a known quantity and not all that favorably known even in that administration, so I would have been very surprised if I had not gotten support. I didn't have any hesitation in making recommendations should as call in the press corps and tell them about what's going on. It was his reaction to that sort of thing that Helms decided he had to come down to Santiago and save the situation. There is an amusing, I don't know if it is a Herblock cartoon, at that time which shows the inside of a travel agency, you can tell it is a travel agency because on the window hang a bunch of posters "visit here," "visit there." At the counter is Helms and the posters extol all the worse dictatorial countries around the world.

I think, to add one perhaps obvious point, I knew I had good support in the congress and had worked on trying to build it up in congress before I left for Chile. I was hoping to be able to do and at least answer questions they had. For the most part they were very supportive. Actually when I left Chile there was a congressional resolution expressing appreciation for my tenure there.

Q: Let's go back to India, what about the Indian press and the media. How did you find them?

BARNES: TV at that point was almost entirely government. The print media was quite wide open and not interfered with by the government and I would make it a point to meet, usually over tea in the afternoon, with groups of journalists. We had a good USIS staff so we were in touch. I'd say, the Indian press was basically well disposed which I think reflects a broader interest in and awareness of the United States.

Q: How effective did you find the USIA (United States Information Agency) operation in India, both in terms of getting information and being able to reach audiences?

BARNES: Two examples come to mind. One would be USIA's ability to bring people together for these periodic discussions I would have. It wasn't a press conference as such, it was more either making an announcement or asking them for their views on what was going on in the country. Or for me to answer their questions about United States policy.

One exemption, I don't know whether I attribute this to the USIS, probably not. We were talking earlier about the Sikhs and their wanting their own state in the Punjab area. There was a pretty radical group, actually the one involved in the assassination of Indira Gandhi, wanting more than Sikh Punjab, they want a whole new country called Khalistan. Somewhere along the line in a discussion I had had in one of these groups, I tried to present the analogy between Puerto Rico and Punjab, by saying, "Here's a distinct group of people who are part of the United States, who consider themselves as Americans, so we have at least some understanding what it is when people want to affiliated themselves with each other." Somewhat of a general comment, I thought, but in fact that I made it in response to a question on Khalistan, and specifically why had we not given a visa to a leading exponent of Khalistan. The next morning or so, I was in my office in the embassy which faces a large boulevard and heard what sounded like a street demonstration type of noise, and knowing that up the street a little ways was the Afghan embassy which was sometimes the subject of street protests, I figured it was something like that. So when the noise halted outside our embassy, I decided it much to something else. It turned out it was an anti-Barnes demonstration, because I had the audacity to suggest that there was another solution to Khalistan other than the one that these people wanted, or at least that one could consider a variety of situations. I saw that on a couple of placards that were tied around lampposts suggesting that I ought to go home.

Q: In Chile how did you find George Schultz there? Did he ever visit?

BARNES: He didn't come while I was there, but I had a long talk with him before I went to Chile and sketched out for him the approach I was planning to take that I mentioned to you earlier. Made sure in other words that he knew what I thought I needed to do and was comfortable with what that be. And I got all that. Then in the whole question of the student who was burned to death, I was in touch periodically and got messages of reassurance that I was supported in what I was doing. I don't remember the exact date, but it was probably a month or two before the plebiscite, before we had that information I mentioned this morning, when we knew the plebiscite was coming and were hopeful that there would be nothing that would interfere with a fair plebiscite. I saw Schultz again, I reported back to him what I was doing and my perception of the situation was.

I tend to think in terms of specific situations. Vernon Walters mean anything to you? Ok, he was ambassador to the UN when I was in Chile and exercising a fair amount of influence from there especially on economic things in terms of not approving or trying to question Chilean related projects because of human rights considerations. I occasionally had to get Schultz's help on this.

Q: How did you find the media in Chile? You've commented that the media was pretty much controlled.

BARNES: Well, yes and no. Controlled in the sense that the government could close a paper down. Could create inconveniences, if nothing else, for a publisher, that sort of thing. But considering this was a dictatorship and not a particularly forthcoming dictatorship, there wasn't that much in the way of obvious censorship of the media. I think I mentioned at that point, or most of the time I was there, with one exception a TV station under the auspices of the Catholic Church, the rest of the TV was government controlled and managed.

It was the print media that had a fair amount of leeway, but they also knew what was too far, so there was an amount of self restraint, or constraint as well. One of my ways of working with the press was, and this is where USIA fits in, is that the PAO (Public Affairs Officer) and information officer would periodically bring together a half dozen or so newspaper people, or newspaper/magazine people and we would have a talk over lunch. Almost like a press conference, but it would be in a luncheon atmosphere.

Q: Did you find the press pretty trustworthy or sensationalist?

BARNES: Sensational, but more in terms of somebody-saw-a-three-legged-cat-yesterday, that sort of thing. But not sailing off on foreign policy issues, because that was part of, I don't know if you would call it an understanding, where the journalist knew there were certain things they could not touch. For example, the mention I made of the cartoon of Pinochet watching the TVs, that came very much toward the end of, if not the regime, then the end of the pre-plebiscite period. Obviously that paper felt that they could get away with that much at that point, and could.

Q: Were your consular officers picking up stuff from people coming in? Often consular officers are easy for the public to get to than anyone else and speak about what they have been going through.

BARNES: Not often. Some cases which were more complicating, or puzzling, for example there was the situation of a American Citizen professor from somewhere in the northeast who had been trekking in Chile and disappeared. His family sought our help in terms of trying to push the Chilean authorities to work more diligently to find a trace of him. Last I knew, about a year or so ago, nothing was seen of him. We did not have at that point a very large American colony, if I could call it that, but a fair number of Chilean companies which were representing or were agents of American firms, so there was sort of a semi-American colony.

Q: Were we encouraging or discouraging American companies.

BARNES: They were definitely encouraging. From Pinochet's standpoint I think he felt that he had created an atmosphere that was business friendly. Nothing radical about it as compared to the Allende regime. I would say over those couple of years talking with American business people who had come to Chile I saw a shift for a feeling that this isn't too bad, at least there is stability in the country, to maybe this is not so good for a longer run stability in the country. In general there was an American business appreciation and respect for Chilean business acumen.

Q: As things moved toward the referendum, were we seeing any distance between the various armed services. You mentioned the views of the air force admitting they lost the plebiscite.

BARNES: Maybe I didn't finish that part of the story. Yes, the air force general was the one on his way into the meeting had said, "I think the "no" vote has won." What I heard subsequently from him was that when Pinochet passed around his draft of a proclamation re-imposing martial law, this particular person tore it up.

Q: Did our attachés have productive relationship with the military services? Or did Pinochet freeze our attachés out?

BARNES: Not surprising military are fairly disciplined and our attachés were on good personal terms with the relevant Chilean officers in the different services and we occasionally would have visits from SOCOM (Southern Command) in Panama. So there were communication channels for seeing each other. But in contrast to the civilian, or civil, parts of the society, very little, what should I say, breaking of ranks, that probably a little too exact. The same air force marshal I was talking about though, at least in his conversations with me, and I suspect with other foreigners, wasn't at all bashful about expressing some reservations about the Pinochet rule.

Q: I know we are skipping back and forth a bit, but on the subject of relations with the military, were your attachés in India picking up any concern on the part of the Indian military about the effectiveness of Soviet tactics and equipment when brought up against U.S. equipment?

BARNES: Let me give you the indirect answer to that, not because I don't have a direct answer, but I don't think it is terrible good. In my conversations with Indian military people one of the efforts we were involved in at the embassy at the time with DoD (Department of Defense) and with CINCPAC (Commander in chief, Pacific Command) in this case, was try to find ways where we could enhance the interaction between the U.S. military and the Indian military. Got the necessary interest in Washington and somewhat to my surprise we were able to get some interest on the part of the Indian military working through our attachés, but occasionally I would talk to the defense minister or talk to the Prime Minister, that sort of thing. So, I'm not surprised the way things, have, should I say, blossomed over the last decade or so.

Q: Given the American human rights stance, in India did we get involved in the cast system and that sort of thing?

BARNES: I think we took that as so much a part of Indian society that for an outsider to get involved...we got involved probably only in the broadest sense of human rights concerns, the general importance of human rights.

Q: The Indian caste system has some aspects of the apartheid system in South Africa, but we never went down that road?

BARNES: No. I don't know about your analysis, but mine was essentially the Africans themselves got the point across, and had enough in the way of solidarity to be able to make it stick. Then, you could call it, the fortuitous nature of who was in what place at that point, both among the Africans and the South African government. In a later incarnation I go t to know one of the people on the South African side who had been involved in some of the negotiations, which gave me some insight into that.

Q: What was you impression of the university system in India?

BARNES: Very extensive, but uneven in terms of the quality. By extensive I mean both in terms of coverage, it was a rare part of the country where you don't have a district capital or certainly in the state capital where you don't have a couple of universities. The attention, going back to Indira Gandhi's time, on science and the importance of scientific research was very strong.

Q: Was the communications age making itself felt in India? Fax, internet, that sort of thing? BARNES: I was just back in Delhi for a couple days a month or so ago, and most of what I observed and in talking to people, I don't know how to put it in qualities, but everything is all over the place. There may be 70 channels, or 68 channels, or something like that; talk radio is available; interestingly enough the newspapers seem to be doing quite well.

Q: What was the state of communications in Chile? For example, the Embassy communications with Washington? Direct lines? Faxes?

BARNES: Let me see if I can generalize, not surprisingly a combination of close concentration in terms of any current problem; sharing analysis and sharing ideas for approaches. Or informal periodic letters back to the country director, or possibly a deputy assistant secretary. My sense is that without having more communication than we needed, we had a lot. So I did not feel cut-off or uninformed. Didn't sense any restraint from people back in Washington. The important thing is always to make sure we shared with each other in Mission what we knew.

Q: We are coming to your retirement; you retired in 1988?

BARNES: Yes a couple of weeks after the plebiscite, which was at the very end of 1988.

Q: What did you do in retirement? [Editor's Note: additional comments on India and Chile are interspersed in the following paragraphs.]

BARNES: I started working for a non-governmental organization set up by a couple of high school level institutions in New England; dedicated to the promotion of so-called hard language, in this case Japanese, Chinese and Arabic at the high school level. We had, this is a summer program, we had students from a number of schools in the area who came for the courses. There was a heavy stress on the oral ability to converse. I did that for a couple of years, 1992-1993.

Around 1993 I was asked to be a visiting professor of International Relations, took the place of somebody whose name you would know, Tony Lake, who at that point was on the faculty of Mount Holyoke College. So I did that for a semester and then did a similar position at a college in upstate New York. Then switched to Boston Simons College for two years, was their foreign affairs person, of course I was no longer in the Foreign Service. I taught courses as well as acting as an advisor to students. Just as I was finishing that I got an offer to work with the Carter Center and became the director for about six years of their conflict resolution human rights projects.

Q: Let's talk about the Carter Center, this is fairly important institution. You were there from when to when?

BARNES: From 1994 to 2000.

Q: When you were there how was the Center working? What was it doing?

BARNES: (Crosstalk) I would say somewhat uneven in terms of focusing on issues and then sustaining the focus. There was anyway, a temptation to get involved in a fairly large number of issues in than not be able to follow through always. In part that is because, I felt, in many respect the Center and obviously Carter himself could be very effective in a whole range of situations. So I was taking on more, not that the individual undertakings were important, but were taking on more than perhaps could be handled well all at the same time. Had a chance, parenthetically, just a couple of weeks ago when I was in Nepal, to see a couple of people from the Center who were involved in the election monitoring project at that point.

The Center's key players, not surprisingly, are the two Carters themselves, Rosalind and Jimmy Carter, both of whom have a very wide rang of interests and who are very much a team in terms of how they go about that business. At the same time, it is also got what I recall traditionalist aspects, this is the sense that this was we've done things, this is the way we ought to continue to do them, without necessarily looking at the time has come to modify the approach. I was impressed both by the Carters' ability to bring peoples' talents out, that is to encourage and push the best in peoples' talents, whether that applies to necessarily being able to total up what this does on the demands on the institution. Very strong program on international health; strong accent on African problems. A lot of interest in democracy promotion. It's quite a broad agenda to start with.

For me, it was fascinating both in terms of observing the Carters work and working with them, and secondly the variety of things I got involved in. Aside from when I was Director General and visited posts in various areas of the world, I had never had much of an opportunity to spend any time in Africa. I found myself involved in a program close to the genocide in Rwanda for a little while. Some time in the Congo. Some time in Ethiopia. I am very grateful, if nothing else, for all the education I received.

Q: When you went to Rwanda, the Congo and all, were you looking at what had gone wrong and what we could do right?

BARNES: That's a little broader than what I was doing, although some Carter Center activities continued over time. I was more, if not a program trouble shooter, then sort of an investigator of particular aspects. In Rwanda there was an attempt to try to get a sense of what the prospects were for any sort of durable, stable situation in the country. I had a fairly long talk with the individual who is now the president of Rwanda, who at that point was more a leader of a faction than anything else.

I'm just jumping around in my thoughts about the Carter Center, spent about a week in China, most of it in Tibet. Carter had offered and the Chinese government had, what should I say, acquiesced not exactly enthusiastically, but acquiesced in Carter's sending a couple of people to Tibet and in Tibet regions to provide him with some advice as to what if anything might be a path for the Chinese and the Tibetans to reach some sort of accommodation. Spent about a week, partly in Lhasa and partly in adjacent areas which had significant Chinese population, and also spend time in Beijing with people in the government. Did a report for Carter which he in turn passed on to some in the Chinese leadership. I had a fair amount of contact with the Dali Lama including a visit where I took a message from Carter to the Dali Lama's location in Darmsala in India.

Q: Did you feel that the Dali Lama was looking for an independent Tibet at that time?

BARNES: No. My sense is that although he would like that, he understood that that was not anything that could reasonably hope for without a major change in China which did not seem at all likely.

Q: What about Carter? I've heard people say with Carter that he had many admirable traits, but he could be very stubborn and once he made up his mind he was impervious to change.

BARNES: Yes, there may be some truth in that. The good side of that is he is prepared to tackle just about anything if he thinks he can make a difference. I don't think he overestimates difficulty, he is realistic in terms of what he undertakes, but is prepared to error on the side of taking some chances to do something that is important. Timing is important in that sense, as well as the personal relationship he has built up over time that might make something possible in this country by virtue of that relationship whereas it would not have been in another one. He is stubborn; opinionated, persistence may be a kinder word, because he is not stubborn all the time.

Q: What about Mrs. Carter, Rosalind?

BARNES: Very thoughtful. Low key, but well worth listening to just about anything she says. I was going to say, let me see if I can put it the right way, I can imagine sometimes some of the discussions she has with her husband, but haven't seen the two of them strongly disagreeing with each other with other people around. Now it may be because they don't strongly disagree that often. The issue on which I worked particularly with her was the death penalty. That she was very devoted to and very thoughtful in terms of thinking about approaches and given the obstacles of what might make some difference over some period of time. I have a lot of respect for her.

Q: The death penalty certainly stirs up a lot of emotion in the United States. Were you tackling this in an American context or world context?

BARNES: From her standpoint it was general, universal, but particularly in the American context.

Q: I was wondering, any headway made on that issue?

BARNES: I think since I am talking on when I was working with her which was up to 2000, that practically a decade ago, yes, I think so. Just judging from recent court cases and so.

Q: It is much more open for discussion now than it used to be.

BARNES: There are some obvious exemptions.

Q: After you left the Carter Center in 2000, what did you do?

BARNES: Did a variety of things. There was a project or so which we did with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. Do you know Tom Graham by any chance? He is one of the Rockefeller Foundation program managers. In an attempt to try to bring a group of Indians together to talk about arms control and disarmament and the gaps - this goes back to what we talked about in the military - between U.S. perceptions and Indian perceptions. Had one gathering in this country, one gathering in India and then sort of ran out of steam, in part, because, not surprisingly, imagine the impact of the Indian nuclear test. There was somewhat less interest in disarmament measures at that point from the U.S. because it did not like what India had done and India because they were defensive about what they had done.

Then began work on what turned out to be a four, five year project that was an attempt to bring Indian and Pakistani scientists together to talk about common interests in a region called Siachen. Does that ring a bell at all? On the western side of India and the north of Kashmir, there is glacier named Siachen which has a reputation of being the highest glacier in the world at 24,700 feet. Roughly 20 years ago, Indian intelligence got information which they believed that the Pakistanis were about to try to capture the top of the glacier. Why anyone wanted to capture a glacier at 24,000 feet, I'm not sure, but anyway. So the India military at the time thought they had better preempt, so they have been fighting over that area for the last 20 some odd years. The concept which we went with to the foundations was maybe if you looked at the scientific potential of 24,000 feet, you could find some efforts that was cooperative rather than disruptive.

To make a long story much shorter, we got people in both countries interested; we got some funding in this country and were about to have our first meeting in Lahore when the Pakistani authorities told us they would not give visa to the Indian scientists. So we scrambled and decided, well let's go outside India or Pakistan. Chose Kathmandu. But the thing that none of us realized, we have been involved in the area too long, was that Nepal had become a tourist haven or a tourist attraction. And in that particular month of September that year there were no seats on any planes in and out of Kathmandu. Third phase, and finally successful phase, was the end of March just now in Kathmandu where we had an international conference on the cyrosphere with Indian and Pakistan participation and Chinese participation and a couple of other countries as well.

Then I'm working on the possibility of something comparable, but in the area of agro-bio-technology, again India and Pakistan, science related. Trying to pick up an effort from a couple of years ago, again India Pakistan, but in the area of health. When I was in Delhi this last time I talked to a couple of people in the medical field there about this idea.

My other area in which I have been involved and will be for another year or two, linked in the sense of science, is Romanian related. In the early '90s as things were changing in East Europe, congress passed legislation which set up something called Enterprise Funds to lend to "private economy or a business economy," not a state economy, and gave grants to boards of directors made up of the nationals of the two countries the U.S. and the former eastern European communist country to try to find ways to promote the private sectors in those countries which did not have much in the way of private sectors. Since about 1996, I guess it is, I have been the chair of the board of the Romanian-American Enterprise Fund. That's beginning to come to an end. We are hoping, if we ever get the paperwork out of AID, hoping to be able to set up an educational foundation to promote scholarships for high school level students. That's what I am doing now.

Q: Doesn't sound as though you have had a quiet retirement.

BARNES: No, I probably have not had a quiet retirement, although it has been interesting, but I hope occasionally useful, retirement. In addition I still have managed to spend a fair amount of my time in Vermont.

Q: Harry, I want to thank you so much for your time and for sharing with us.

End of interview